

The different world magic is too behind!



遅れる

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異世界魔法は

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OVERLAP

Chapter 01

Yakagi Suimei, a Magician

—Felmenia Stingray was one of the court mages of the Astel Kingdom. As the second daughter of Count Stringray, she was a young lady of noble birth and raised without any inconveniences. She was a genius that had looked into the depths of magic by studying under an old mage, who was called the Sage, from a small age on after her extraordinary magical potential was discovered.

It had been ten years since she started learning the mysticism from the old mage. After learning the basics of magic from him, she was quickly initiated into all the secrets, which are said to take at least thirty years. So she was told: There is no more I can teach you. Follow through with your own wits and magic.

Her life then became more hectic compared to the time she spent studying under the old mage. There was magic research of course, but also the appointment as the youngest court mage, a lot of jobs entrusted to her and an unthought-of number of party invitations. New experiences like numerous unfamiliar jobs, tea parties with noble ladies, typical noble dances and escapes from magical dungeons kept occurring in succession. This lifestyle without even sparing time for sleep, was harsh and painful, but so fulfilling that she could forget all the hardships. So much that she already felt a sense of accomplishment. Right now, she was living her life. Not in the birdcage of a noble lady, but as working gear of this kingdom.

A few years after she left the old mage's apprenticeship, Felmenia made a great discovery. In the middle of a job to subjugate high ranking monsters and devils as a court mage, she discovered the principle of

flames, which no one acquired before.

Yes, Felmenia finally attained the truth at the tender age of eighteen. The truth about the flame. She found the white flame that burns all things in existence.

Felmenia reported this to her teacher and his Majesty the King without allowing herself to rejoice. Her teacher showered her with unprecedented praise and astonishment and even the King granted her words of praise for her great achievement.

At this moment, she found meaning in her life. Her continued efforts in searching for herself truly paid off. And it solidified her resolve to continue on the path of magic.

After that, Felmenia achieved numerous meritorious deeds in the kingdom while she pressed on with magic. From the subjugation of the devils in the north through to the extermination of the giant monster in the desert downwards to the reform of the magic studies in the Kingdom and the establishment of an academy to advance it.

Her achievements earned her praises from all sides. The gratitude of the people, the jealousy of her colleagues and the expectations from her parents were the greatest honour for her.

And by now, Felmenia was recognized as one of the best mages in the Kingdom.

However, she couldn't lift a single finger in front of the boy standing right before her eyes despite holding the valid title of the strongest mage in the Kingdom.

A full moon hung in the star-covered dark sky. Underneath, in the courtyard of the Camelia Castle, the seat of King Astel, the boy in front of her opened his mouth really stumped.

“...Oh boy. I can’t endorse tailing someone and snooping around. Only a pitiful and foolish stray sheep that doesn’t know the world yet, is allowed to do that.”

This boy, speaking in unfamiliar terms, was one of the two people, who were summoned together with the Hero Reiji. Unlike the girl, who had agreed to defeat the Devil King together with the Hero, the extremely ordinary boy had denied the King’s request in front of the assembled company and demanded to be send back to his own world.

Like you can see— I’m an ordinary guy. I’ve no special power, so I can’t fight any monster or devils, much less the Devil King. I can’t fight. Don’t drag me into it. Send me back.

After saying that, he was confined in a given room. That happened a few days ago.

The girl had mustered her courage even while appearing to suffocate from the fear and confusion after the sudden summoning, and loudly announced to accompany the Hero. On the other hand, the boy was backbit by the cabinet ministers, generals and castle guards as disgraceful, ignoble, egoistic and scum after he stubbornly insisted to be send back.

Yet, this current situation.

The white flame, her utmost pride up till now, was erased by the boy with a casual wink of his hand. And right now, he stood in front of her while emitting a serene magical power and a chilly daunting aura.

“—Okay, can I go next, Miss Mage?”

At this moment, Felmenia Stingray realized how foolish she had been.

...The boy was most likely strong and clever. His appearance was a farce.

The ones, who took this pitiful bystander for a fool, were actually fools

themselves. He was that cunning. And his strength was dizzying high to put into words.

This boy was a monster, who had reached an even higher level on magic than her teacher, with numerous secret skills she could never hope to match and had an absurd knowledge that would allow him to kill the Hero, who was granted a tremendous power from the divine protection of the heroic summoning, with a snap of his finger.

He was a genuine mage without doubt.

"...Who are you?"

She asked with a trembling voice, whereupon the boy fiddled bored-looking with something on top of his hand—

"—Yakagi Suimei, a magician."

and named himself for the first time.

Chapter 02

Suddenly in a Different World

“Oww...”

Suimei leaked an anguished voice from the pain on his bottom, which was the price for the sudden event to which he couldn't even react.

It came out of nowhere. Sure, he had forecast that something was going to happen, but it was too sudden to ready himself.

The floor was hard. Probably stone paving or tiles. Falling flat on his backside, his tailbone was in anguish. That happened a moment ago.

So, how did it come this? He didn't even need to recall it, since it only happened a few seconds ago.

On his way back from school with his two friends, he was pulled into a teleport magic circle that had suddenly appeared on the road.

And at the teleported destination, he had hit his bottom.

(...Man, what a blunder.)

Suimei had explored secret magic in the modern era with its concrete jungles. He had only started magic around twelve years ago, but was confident in his skills. Yet, he, a modern magician, easily fell for the magic from someone else.

He had sensed it, even seen it, yet he couldn't react and simply watched.

If that wasn't a blunder, then what? He felt ashamed and disappointed.

With still teary eyes from the pain on his bottom and the humiliation, Suimei suddenly faced sideways, worried about his friends who had walked besides him—

“Ow...”

Right next to him, his friend Shana Reiji struggled with the same pain on his bottom like Suimei, who was rubbing his bottom.

"Hey, Reiji, you okay?"

"Yeah, somehow. You?"

"My ass hurts. Like seriously. It split in half..."

"Hahaha, you too, huh— Wait, it's just you here, Suimei?"

Reiji laughed merrily on his silly joke, but only for a moment. He then noticed the absence of their other friend Anou Mizuki, who had walked with them, and called out uneasy.

She certainly wasn't here. The girl, who had walked next to them just a moment ago, was nowhere to be found.

He looked around briefly. The round room was enclosed by stone walls and except the old candle stand, which gave a dim illumination, there was nothing. No, there was something: A solid door and a pattern on the hard floor they sat on, the teleport magic circle.

"Y- Yeah, Mizuki isn't here..."

Suimei muttered still somewhat perplexed in anxiety over his missing friend. Meanwhile Reiji racked his brains with an even more bewildered expression.

"Why... And where are we...?"

"I don't know either. But I do know that we were brought to this unknown place by someone's will."

"...You mean that?"

Reiji looked dubious at the big magic circle on the floor. Suimei followed his suit and looked at it again too. Within one big circle were drawn four more circles and the geometric patterns in it didn't match the western four or five elements, nor the Chinese five elements. And words he had never seen before on a magic circle were put in place there.

He could tell that the circle was similar to the summoning or séance ones

that he developed himself, but that knowledge only applied to him. Reiji, an ordinary guy, obviously didn't know anything about it. Suimei knew him since middle school, but never told him that he was a magician. Therefore Reiji could only know about the thing at his feet from subcultures like manga or anime.

And suspicion arose in Reiji from that. He only had a vague guess that maybe this thing was the reason for their current situation.

"Most likely."

"Uwah..."

On Suimei's clear affirmation to the assessment of their situation, Reiji suddenly made an exhausted look. It certainly was the right situation for such a face. Even Suimei himself had a touch of bitterness on his stumped face right now.

"...Hey, Suimei. Somehow, this out the blue development seems really familiar to me."

"I bet. The novel from Mizuki the other day had the same stuff."

"I know, right? It really resembles the plot, where the MC suddenly gets called to another world and is told to defeat the Devil King."

"Not funny. I can't laugh at this joke."

With a face like from a stomach-ache, Suimei answered in an annoyed tone. Upon that, Reiji had an expression of mixed feelings and laughed dryly.

"Ha, Haha... But it really feels like that."

"Are you being serious, Reiji?"

"Yeah."

Suimei averted his gaze from the nodding Reiji for now and secretly scanned the surroundings with magic. Ending up in the same

development from a novel was too bizarre, so he didn't accept it, but if this wasn't Earth, then there should be difference in the environment. Little by little, he collected information. The gravity was average and the atmosphere had a similar composition as well. It were acceptable values due to regional variation.

Still—

(The Mana's rich here... Is it the room's fault?)

Indeed, the source for mystic powers in the air called Mana was very rich here. So rich that it was on par with places like above a spirit vein, a sacred temple or circle and the Navel of the Earth.

However, deciding that this was a different world only based on that would be jumping to conclusions and totally unreasonable. It was possible that they simply chose a place with a rich Mana density to activate the magic circle. Actually, that was the most plausible explanation.

To begin with, Reiji had no means to probe the Mana and wasn't able to feel a change in it. His hunch must come from something else.

"Reiji, what makes you think that?"

"I just got this really strong hunch."

"Oh boy, did your brain melt, my dear Reiji?"

"No, not like I was hit by any weird electro-magnetic waves. Just look—"

A loud crash followed Reiji's words. He had lightly hit the floor outside the magic circle, whereupon the stone floor was smashed to dust.

"Impossible..."

Suimei widened his eyes from seeing that. Even if Reiji was a handsome super athlete, this was going too far. It was impossible. A high force was needed to smash up stones. A mere knock could never achieve that.

Maybe if he used his overwhelming good looks, but no, that was going in a different direction.

"See what I can do."

"Don't give me that. Stop feeding me strange ideas..."

Damn. A summon magic that permanently strengthen your physique sure is awesome... His thoughts wandered into that direction, but then he suddenly realized that his mind worked like that and analyzed the merits and demerits of magic because he himself was a magician. There were other things to consider first, yet he lacked the tension for it.

"So, what about you, Suimei?"

"...Nope."

Reiji asked him hinting, but he could only reply like that. Even when he squeezed his fist or transferred Mana, it didn't feel like he was strengthened at all. Most likely, only Reiji was chosen for the position of the sacred Hero that defeats the evil Devil King. If so, then Suimei was totally out of place here.

He dropped his shoulders, obviously flabbergasted, whereupon the magic circle to his feet suddenly started to glitter. Reiji's expression became filled with unrest.

"This is..."

"It's activating...! Are we transferred again or..."

"Teleported!?"

Reiji was quick on the uptake. Suimei put himself on guard while listening to his accurate answer. Then a magic circle of one size smaller appeared in midair.

"Here it comes!"

"—!"

As soon as a silhouette appeared from the magic circle, Reiji made his move. Maybe he identified what had appeared? His movements were agiler than before. An effect from his strengthened physique.

Thus Reiji caught Anou Mizuki as soon as he spotted her appearing in midair.

"Mizuki!"

"Fueh? Reiji-kun, how...?"

"Good for you, Mizuki. Reiji literally saved your ass."

And like this, the three of them were reunited in an unknown place.

Chapter 03

An Absurd Request like Expected

"No way. Are you serious..."

"Yeah. The possibility exists."

After Reiji caught Mizuki, she was filled in about the current situation. At first she was rather confused too, but not being alone here surely worked in favour. With the encouragement of her two friends, she accepted it before long. Still, one had to praise her for having nerves of steel as she didn't run away from reality.

"Okay, I get it."

"You sure are quick on the uptake."

"You two are quite calm too. It would be embarrassing to fall in a panic by myself. Besides, now that we're here, we can only take things as they come."

Mizuki adopted a clear-cut attitude. She had long, black hair and a gentle look with an appearance that made her look like some frail, secluded young lady. Furthermore, she possessed a gentle, yet surprisingly strong and unperturbed heart. Reiji smiled at her.

"You're strong, Mizuki."

"O- Okay."

She ended up turning bright red from his smile. That was nothing new, but neither was Reiji's unconscious enticer skill.

A totally inappropriate steamy mood filled the room and Suimei asked Mizuki as if to splash water on it.

"So, Mizuki, there's something I want to ask."

"Eh? Sure."

"If this is like the novel, then next comes..."

"Y- Yeah, some important people of the different world show up.

Otherwise..."

The first part was like expected the same from the novel, but she added an otherwise, so there must be a different development possible too.

Reiji asked about that after a short pause.

"Is there something else?"

"In some other novel, the destination, in other words this place, happened to be the castle of the Devil King."

"...Uwah. Now that's harsh."

Yes, in most novels, the summoned MC would only face off against the Devil King at the end of the story after many twists and turns. However. When this was an unexpected plot like Mizuki had mentioned, then this would be the focal point of the climax, the last battle.

That wasn't all too funny. Only a peril for their lives. Such a distress was really redundant.

Then Reiji asked Mizuki with a calm tone.

"If I remember correctly, that novel was the type, where the MC defeated the Devil King at once and triumphantly returned to the county of the different world as a hero, right?"

"Yeah. Then another strong foe appeared and later the MC was dragged into a civil war..."

Mizuki started to explain, when Suimei, enhancing his hearing with magic, heard some noise from outside the room.

"Listen, you two."

"Mh?"

"I know already. Mizuki, someone is coming and a lot of them at that."

Apparently Reiji had heard them too. His own enhancement wasn't for

show. Right after giving a simple explanation to her, he shifted his gaze towards the origin of the noise, the passage behind the door, and stood protecting in front of Mizuki.

She cowered anxiously. And Suimei took a stance like Reiji as well.

"Now let's see what shows up..."

"I just hope it will be these important people that summoned us."

"Don't be stupid. If anything, hope for our classmates saying 'fooled ya'."

"..."

Reiji didn't respond to Suimei's little joke. Whether that was because the footsteps drew closer to the door or he simply believed it was actually better when some important people from the different world showed up, was not apparent. Anyway— Who exactly was it that came over and was about to enter the room?

Suimei glanced to the side, where Reiji stood all tensed up, ready to leap forward at any moment, and Mizuki backed off as to not be a hindrance to him.

As for Suimei, instead of growing stiff in an unfamiliar situation, he was excited with his heart was racing over this unpredictable situation. His heart as a magician of course.

Then he quietly checked his belongings. He got here without any preparations, so he carried nothing but mundane things on him. It were— (I got my altered bag and the stuff inside. A chain accessory, a vial with mercury, a card, a jacket, the discrepancy gloves and a bit of the eight key nostrum... To be honest, that's all not very useful. But—)

If something happened, he had to act. They all had lived in Japan, so Suimei was most likely the only one with combat experience, as he belonged to the underworld. He would like to keep the fact that he was a

magician hidden, but not in the exchange for his friends' lives. In the worst case, he could just erase their memories, if even he felt sorry about it.

The three of them tensed up from their respective worries. Then the footsteps finally stopped in front of the door.

A short pause that felt like an eternity and cramped their stomachs ensued. Before long, the door was opened with a noise of something heavy being dragged along.

"—!"

"Firmus—"

(My Perdurability—)

While Reiji was distracted, Suimei readied a defence magic. It couldn't be ruled out that they would attack right away. And there was no harm in being prepared.

—And then, a group clad in armour appeared in the entry. They looked like armed humans. A first relief that they weren't monster, devils or demons.

The soldiers warily approached them in an orderly formation.

What will happen? Suimei still kept his magic ready, but the group split up, making way for a little girl with long, blue hair, wearing an elegant white dress, and a woman, wearing a robe as white as a polished pearl.

And then—

"Eh...?"

"Mh—?"

Both females made a bewildered expression as if they met an unexpected development. They huddled together and whispered in secret.

"White Flame, oughtn't there be one summoned Hero?"

"Yes, exactly."

"But I see three people here..."

"My guess would be that two of them were swallowed up in the heroic summoning."

"Oho..."

They were whispering, but with his enhanced ears, Suimei could hear them and while he did understand their language, he was surprised. It was a strangely rhyming language that wasn't Japanese, nor any other language from earth. Although he didn't know the language, he understood it.

A possible explanation for that was that a language spell was cast on him during the summoning. How convenient.

Hearing the words hero and summoned, Suimei decided it wasn't necessary anymore to be alerted and secretly cancelled his magic. Reiji too relaxed his posture.

Then Suimei leaned close to them and asked Mizuki.

"...They seem surprised... Say, Mizuki, know of any plot like this?"

"Yeah. There are stories, where the friends of the summoned hero get dragged along, but..."

Suddenly Mizuki stopped talking and tilted her head to the side. What was up with this hesitation?

"...?"

"Mizuki, something bothering you?"

"Uhm, in said plot, the friend of the summoned hero, in our case either Suimei-kun or me, will make a contract with an evil god and turn against the hero."

"What the? Why an evil god of all things?"

"I'm not sure either.."

Mizuki was flurried in anxiety. To be honest, even Suimei felt like loosing his cool. Contracting an evil god, what kind of bullshit was that? He could only imagine a tragic fate, where the summoning killed thousands of people and even if you survived it, a dangerous evil avatar that uses up all of your life's luck, awaited you and forced you to pay a compensation.

Suimei felt a cold sweat running down his back, whereas Reiji asked Mizuki.

"Turns against the hero... Why suddenly fight me?"

"Because either Suimei-kun or I will come to hate you in this plot, make a contract and fight the hero."

"Eh...?"

Reiji turned remarkably pale on her words and was befuddled, so Mizuki quickly denied it.

"...O- Of course I'll never hate you, Reiji-kun. I- If anything, I l- l- lo-love..."

As she was embarrassed to say it to his face, her words gradually became quieter and the end couldn't be heard anymore, but Reiji's face colour took a turn for the better and he awkwardly faced Suimei.

"A- And you, Suimei?"

"Nah. I wouldn't have stayed with you for six years if I hated you. Just think about it."

"G- Good..."

Hearing their answers, Reiji made a sigh of relief now. To be honest, there was no way Suimei could come to hate such a nice guy.

While the three had such an exchange, the girl with the long, blue hair

called out to them.

"Excuse me for interrupting your conversation, but do you have a moment?"

"Ah, yes."

When Reiji give his okay, the blue-haired girl elegantly corrected her posture and dropped a curtsey, then she spoke.

"Forgive me for bringing you here so suddenly. I am the second child of Almadias Root Astel, the King of Astel Kingdom: Titania Root Astel. And this is the person that made efforts to summon you here..."

When Princess Titania turned a bit to the side to introduce and beckon her, the person in question, the woman in the white robe stepped forward.

"My name is Felmenia Stingray, a court mage. Nice to make your acquaintance."

The woman was called White Flame by the Princess earlier. She had named herself a mage and her body was indeed surrounded fluently by mana. She seemed to be a long practiser of magic.

After their introductions, Reiji stepped forward now and started to name himself politely.

"Thank you for your polite introduction. My name is Shana Reiji. If you are more familiar with family names last, then please call me Reiji Shana. These two are my friends. Mizuki Anou to my right and Suimei Yakagi to my left."

Reiji introduced them like that, whereupon the guards made a ruckus and the princess Titania, as well as the mage Felmenia made an impressed expression. Reiji's dignified behaviour and well-mannered greeting must have been impressed them.

Next up, Mizuki came to the front and introduced herself to them.

"Nice to meet you. My name is Mizuki Anou..."

And lastly, Suimei too stepped forward, imitating Mizuki.

"I'm...Suimei Yakagi."

His introduction ended by simply stating his name. He had nothing more to say, nor was this any situation to run his mouth carelessly.

Then Titania let her gaze wander over these three and closed her eyes like thinking about something.

"Reiji-sama, Mizuki-sama, Suimei-sama it is then. The reason we called you here is because we have to ask a favour from... one of you at all costs."

"And that is?"

"Yes, at present the leader of the devils, Devil King Nakshatra threatens the peace of our world and I would like you to exterminate him."

...At the very moment Princess Titania uttered this, Suimei, Reiji and Mizuki had all the same reaction in their hearts: That figures!

Only Suimei additionally placed his hand on his chin and looked up at the ceiling.

Chapter 04

Absolute Denial in the Audience Room

Upon their arrival to a different world via summoning, the princess appeared with a request to save the world. In this unnatural, restrained atmosphere, this development had apparently been delayed. It could not help but have a resigned confusion.

While they were shocked over understanding what she had just asked, Titania too, had asked, as if she was a little confused.

Titania: "I'm sorry since this is so abrupt, but which one of you is the hero?"

Reiji: "Um..."

Mizuki: "That is..."

At this question, Reiji and Mizuki exchanged glances with troubled faces. It couldn't be that one of them was the hero. They were originally just normal people. If they asked "What do you mean by hero?", then it would inevitably be the equivalent of "I'm definitely not the hero." Thus, there would be no meaning to asking that question, but their lack of understanding of what had been asked was still a problem.

Suimei, on the other hand, planned to obtain information from the one

who had summoned them here, and asked, "May I (speak)?"

Titania: "Yes, please go ahead."

Suimei: "You guys summoned us to get a hero – aren't there any signs that identify one as a hero?"

Titania: "Signs of a hero...was it?"

Suimei: "Yes."

Following that, Titania glanced at the quiet Felmenia, who nodded and turned towards the three.

Felmenia: "There is such a thing. The hero that was summoned by the ceremony, that calls forth great men, upon crossing over to this world, is given divine protection by the elements, and this mighty power is kept within his body. Are any of you in a similar situation?"

"If that's the case, then I think it's me. After I came here, I've felt unbelievable power bursting forth from within me," Reiji answered. The surrounding soldiers began to murmur amongst themselves. Yes, right here, the power had manifested in him. However, both Mizuki and Suimei

were the same in that no power had revealed itself.

Be that as it may...

"From the elements, huh," Suimei muttered to himself, suspicious of their true motives. The elements were also present in their own world, and there were four or five main ones: earth, water, fire, and wind. *Besides those, magic, which plays an important part, may also be considered one.*

But, given Felmenia's tone just then, it was as if it was certain that there would be a person like that. The foundation of the belief in ghosts is magic. Even if the spirit magic was part of the foundation, it was still a little strange. Or, possibly, if magic here is as she had said –

Titania: "You're the hero, right?"

Reiji: "Uh... Yes."

While Suimei was thinking, Titania, as if enraptured, had been staring at Reiji. As Reiji was the hero, she might have developed some sort of longing for him. Furthermore, besides his (handsome) face, there was a certain gracefulness. Reiji, who was facing her, was a little puzzled.

And then, Titania abruptly took Reiji's hand.

Titania: "Hero, please, somehow, please, please help."

Reiji: "Eeeeh!?"

Felmenia: "Pri-princess..."

The abrupt event had caused even the robed Felmenia to be astonished. In an impatient voice, she called out to Titania.

Titania: "Ahh..Sorry, Hero...What I had just done was rude... After this, I think my father will explain to you in the audience room, so please answer then."

Reiji: "Un..understood."

Titania: "Well then, this way please. I will lead the way."

At Titania's words, the soldiers once again orderly lined up, opening a path for Suimei and his friends.



While following the soldiers, they gradually became used to the passage as they walked. As Titania had said, the audience room was fairly close, somewhere inside the castle.

When they followed, from the gloomy stone passage that was illuminated by candles, they exited into a bright marble passage.

On the paths they had taken thus so far, there hadn't been such exquisite, pretty ornaments. Here and there, there were arrangements of pieces of art, drawings of never before seen creatures, and saw new kinds of armor. This really was a new world, a sword and magic fantasy world. Well, that was the impression the objects in the immediate vicinity had given. On the other side, there was a person who said, well, even the things that were here were not very varied.

The soldiers walked with an admirable gait, as if to protect them. Their scrupulous attention to their training was evident; there wasn't even a murmur amongst them.

Next to the princess was someone who seemed to be a so-called palace guard. The guard's rugged look evoked the same feeling as that of a rock.

And, for the sake of making a good impression on Reiji, Titania walked

next to and continually spoke to him. She began with asking what kind of place it was that he came from, to asking about his age, and then to the likes of asking what he was good at.

However, Mizuki also walked next to him, and she was probably agitated. Although she was not Reiji's lover, she was the one closest to being considered his lover. She was currently, certainly, aiming for that position.

If a beautiful girl of a high social position stuck to him, how do you think she would feel?

Even though her stoic facial expression did not show much, there was a certain sullenness in her that could be seen.

And there was another person: Imperial Court Mage Felmenia...

Suimei : "Is there something wrong with me?"

Felmenia: "...No"

Since earlier, she had turned towards him god knows how many times, glancing at him furtively, and gave up on her curiosity that was mixed with a little hostility. But, she just continued to face forward as if nothing

had happened.

“Having been on guard with magic was a mistake. In that situation, it is probable that they have seen that I can use magic,” Suimei groaned to himself silently.

He had made mistake after mistake. He currently just wanted to go hide himself in a hole.

The existence of magicians and magic should be hidden. In his old world, the present had been dominated by science, and magic was, no matter what, considered heretical. This was common sense in the old world after the suppression of magicians had finished. However, in this world, how did treatment towards magic become like this? An existence that became an imperial court mage was together with a princess? That was on the level of royalty. However, the ordinary status for mages and magic was not yet entirely clear.

It would be a simple matter to reveal the existence of magic in the old world, but foolish. First of all, it would be unacceptable for Reiji and Mizuki to learn of such things, even if they were good friends with him.

In that case, the top priority was how to stop that information from being divulged. This, even if it could be leaving them out, was a needed

countermeasure.

Titania: "We've arrived. Here is my father's audience room; let's go in."

Between the passage and the room, they arrived at a huge, grandiose door, and Titania urged them inside.

One of the soldiers quickly called out to the guard at the door, who muttered something in reply.

Before long, the magnificent door slowly opened.

Reiji: "Wha-!?"

Mizuki: "Eeh!?"

Reiji and Mizuki were shocked. The door suddenly opening had come as a surprise.

The guard hadn't even touched the door, and they hadn't seen any automatic opening or closing mechanism. They didn't completely understand what had just happened.

While holding back his surprise, Reiji hastily asked Titania, "Ho-How did

it open?"

"...It was by magic. Was it that surprising?"

"Ah... In the world we lived in, magic didn't exist."

"Really? So then that was your first time seeing it?"

Titania was smiling ear to ear upon hearing his impressed voice.

On the other hand, Mizuki's eyes began to sparkle.

"...Amazing. Magic really does exist."

Mizuki seemed to hold an interest in magic. *She was a girl who liked stories involving magic.*

And Suimei over here had, of course, noticed the use of magic. Although he hadn't caught what the guard had mumbled, *the spell's composition, the magic formula's expansion, the assignment of the spell, the results, and the magic's invocation, he had all noticed.*

"Wind, huh," he thought to himself.

The thing that had opened the door was simple magic. The incantation was three sections long, and the magic was wind attribute and just physical displacement. However-

Even though it was only to open the door, why did using a single attribute take so much time? No matter how many of those spells of that degree were to be casted, using a three-section chant for one is too impractical...

Suimei seemed to be the only person shocked by such flawed magic.

All that was needed, to open even that unusual door, was simple magic. By converting magic power into an optimal state, one would only need to construct the barest minimum of magic formulas, and by invoking it, the same result would have occurred.

Even though that was all that was required, the guard had even went so far as to forcibly apply the wind attribute, and thus Suimei did not understand. Not only would it increase the length of the incantation, it would also increase the required magic power.

In other words, it was completely impractical. It's common sense that such a spell wouldn't even require chanting. If it was Suimei, he would

only need to move a finger, and the door would have opened “by itself” in the same manner it had done so before.

Who in the world would invest so much into opening the door in such a senseless manner? To Suimei, it was incomprehensible.

“Well, I guess it’s just something the guard wanted to do...”

Suimei rationalized such thoughts as this, saying the guard just wanted to use the wind attribute for opening and closing the door.

While Suimei was thinking about such things, Titania abruptly spoke.

“Suimei-sama isn’t surprised about magic?”

Shit.

“Eh? Oh, I don’t really get surprised at many things...Hahaha.”

“Oh, is that so? But, if this degree can’t surprise you, did you know, if you see an imperial court mage training, (s)he might even be able to omit the chant?”

"That amazing? Ah...I give up."

"Ufufufu..." laughed Titania, merrily and in a lady-like manner. However, Titania had misunderstood; Suimei had been surprised for a different reason.

The door took its time to open. Felmenia's voice rang out as she called to Titania.

"Princess, any time now."

"Yes. Well then, Hero-sama, Mizuki-sama, and Suimei-sama, after me," said Titania as she took the lead and went through the door.

Then, they came into an enormous, spacious room. *The rectangular, spacious room had countless stone pillars that were penetrated by powerfully drawn lines that separated the road from the rooms.* This was the audience room.

"Uwah..."

"Amazing..."

“Ooh..”

The three could not help but let out their surprise. In the audience room, there was a majestic building. Even Suimei, who was thinking about the magic from just then, was fascinated by it.

In the center of the room there was a magnificent throne, with a person seated on it. He was probably the king, Almadias Root Astel. Next to him, a confidant well past his prime could be seen, as well as a number of many other important people.

Without so much as a glance at her surroundings, only looking forward, Titania walked on ahead. She kneeled to the king, who was on an elevation one level higher than the rest. The next to kneel was Felmenia. The three hastily followed suit.

After the king nodded approval after seeing that everyone was there, Titania began her report.

“Titania Root Astel has brought the summoned heroes.”

“Good, my dear Titania. But...why are there three heroes?”

The puzzled king asked, and Felmenia answered this in Titania's stead.

"These two are Yuusha-dono's friends; they were somehow dragged into the summoning."

"What!? Dragged in!?"

"Yes, unfortunately."

Upon hearing her answer, the king hid his surprise by putting on an intrepid face. After that, the surroundings quickly became strife with confusion; questions such as "What do we do now!?" and "I hadn't heard of anything like this!" could be heard from amongst the chaotic shouts.

King: "But, can such a thing really happen? The summoning of heroes has been performed countless times up till now, by various countries, but such a thing has never been heard of, has it not?"

Felmenia: "That is...Even I don't know why the reason that such youths are here, with such limited information, but, the reality is that they are standing here. That's why... Even though it is unfortunate to have been dragged in, there's no changing it."

In the midst of his conversation with Felmenia, the king had changed his facial expression to a grim one.

The already predicted external affairs with other countries would presumably be rendered useless and thrown into confusion because of them.

Then, Suimei mumbled to himself.

“*Various things had occurred as I had expected*, but, other than us here, various other places have also summoned people? Since it appears that was what he meant, it was possible.” In other words, they were needed since, in this world, a Maou had appeared.

To ask this of Mizuki, Suimei became fed up. Abruptly, and forcibly, summoning people from another world, essentially turning them into refugees, would stress them, but the fact that the existence said to be able to destroy the world does not summon a hero, and is forced to come out is a ridiculous story.

“Moreover, it looks like our situation is the first of its kind.”

“I feel sorry for these people...”

While Suimei was whispering to himself, the the king and Felmenia's conversation had seemingly ended. It consisted of questions like, "Who's the hero?" and "Do the other people also have divine protection?"

And, this time, the king's expression had completely changed from one of grim seriousness to one of unyielding fortitude. With the return of his kingly face, he started speaking.

"Hero, I am sorry for abruptly summoning you to this kind of place. I am the thirteenth king of the Astel Kingdom, Almadias Root Astel. And this is my castle, the royal Castle Calmenia."

After the king had showed his subtly implied appreciation in his words, Titania whispered something to Reiji. It was probably something to do with propriety in such a case as this. Reiji immediately stood up.

"Ah?"

Suimei was confused, and the surroundings buzzed with noise. Clearly, the current state of affairs was unbelievable. An unthinkable story in the present day, but in this kind of world in the medieval age, the king is essentially considered the same as a god. In the company of such a person, and in a public place, such an act was tantamount to blasphemy.

Titania: "It's all right! Reiji-sama is the hero that was summonsed to save the world, so he has a lofty position. That's why, in this place, in front of my Father, he can speak as equals; there's no problem."

Suimei: "Is-Is that so?"

Titania had seemingly noticed and answered Suimei's fears. It seemed, somehow, there was no problem. There was a temporary unease as to what would happen, but now there was a feeling of relief.

Accepting the king's thanks, Reiji spoke.

"I am Reiji Shana, your majesty. I am honored to have such a prestigious welcoming (audience)."

"Are you the hero?"

"Yes."

After Reiji addressed the king's inquiry, the surroundings stirred again. Questions such as "That person is the hero?", "What a divine countenance", and thoughts about how fascinating Reiji was spilled out.

When the surrounding voices had eventually died out, the king spoke.

"So, are the two people behind you your friends?"

"Yes. I am his friend Anou Mizuki."

"I'm Yakagi Suimei."

Mizuki and Suimei answered while raising their heads as they were on their knees. Since they were not heroes, they could not behave in the same manner as Reiji, or there would be problems.

"I see. I'm sorry for summoning you two as well. The fault lies in our side, but is there anything we can do for you in apology?"

"Yes."

"Huh?"

While the king was sitting on his throne, such a short answer had been given in reply.

The king, in his own way, had apologized, but their ignoring it had somewhat annoyed him.

The surroundings became bustling with noise again, with censure such as "What sacrilegious words!"; there was a wide difference between the time Reiji had spoken to the king and now.

"Ahem. I still have lots to discuss with the hero, but I guess here will do. It was an abrupt summoning. The hero is probably still confused."

"Eh—"

"Hero and his friends. After this, I will prepare seats for you at the evening party in the reception hall. As soon as the preparations are finished, come, and we will discuss the main problem tomorrow."

The hospitality would extend past that one night. This was the king's special consideration. Having abruptly been summoned, they might need special care.

At these words, the tension in the atmosphere dissipated. However, there was one person who dissented.

"No, your majesty. If it's possible, can we talk about the main issue here and now?"

"Are you sure, hero? You've just come here, and you have probably not steadied your resolve, right?"

"Yes. After all, this is the pattern in which we have to confront the devil king. I wish to ask about it as soon as possible."

The king showed his consideration for the hero's request after pondering over it.

"...Understood. Since that's what you, the hero, wish for, I'll tell the story."

But, that happened way too fast. It was impatient and abrupt. They still hadn't discussed about this unprecedented case with three people yet.

Suimei, driven by his impatience, asked Reiji in a whisper, "O-oi, Reiji! What do you intend to do? Do you have to answer after hearing this? Rather, it's a matter of course--"

"Suimei. That's enough, just leave it to me."

“What? Leave what to yo-Reijiiii!”

Before they finished talking, Reiji stepped out, with Suimei hot on his heels, whispering his dissent.

This was something Suimei absolutely did not want to be responsible for. To suppress the demon king — what the heck kind of fantasy story was this!? Provoking a fight with people who had basically zero combat potential and experience was not only insane, but also, in the first place, they were not obligated to do such a thing anyway.

Moreover, Suimei had a reason to quickly return. *He had promised his late father to leave behind the legacy of his new proposal about magic theory.* While it may be true that magicians are fated to always be at the risk of losing their lives, it doesn't mean that they would risk their life for anything.

While thinking such thoughts, he anxiously looked at Reiji's back. Although there was no reasonable reason for them to take responsibility, there was a soft-hearted person who deviated from the norm. He could not help but agree.

The king asked Reiji who had previously stepped forward.

“Until what part of the story have you already heard about?”

“Earlier, from the princess, I heard that you wanted me to defeat the Demon King. Besides that, I have heard nothing else.”

“Is that so? Well then, Gless.”

The king glanced at the temperate, elderly man that was nearby, who nodded. The man called Gless stepped out.

“I am Gless Duress, the Prime Minister of Astel. Well then, first, I will explain, starting from the current state of affairs.”

“Please.”

“To the north of here, the Astel Kingdom, about three countries away, there was a frigid country called Noxius. The northern Noxius was the boundary between demon territory and human territory, and the people who had been thwarting the invasion of the demons for a long time had been called to the northernmost bastion about half a year ago. However, the demons’ lightning-like invasion had caused the capital to capitulate, and brought about the fall of Noxius.”

With a grimness that leaked into the atmosphere, Prime Minister Gless continued the story.

“In spite of the fact that the people of Noxius lived in such a tense atmosphere, *they boasted a strength not inferior to that of the flat lands*, with a strong national army, but when faced with the invasion of the million-man demon army they couldn’t stand tooth to tooth and they fell in less than a month.”

Then, Mizuki, seemingly with difficulty, asked for the details.

“Um... Regarding the fall of Noxius, the people...”

“The demons have no need to take prisoners of war. At the time of the invasion, most of the citizens were killed by the demons, and those who survived the initial onslaught were hunted down. The few who survived had survived because of their good luck. *The Noxians, as a people, no longer exist.*”

“Man hunts, you said? That’s...”

“Those are the kind of monsters that demons are. They completely look down on humanity, treat humans as if they were worms, *and they have more than enough strength to back it up.* We tried to negotiate, but their

response was far from a reconciliation; rather, they did the reverse, and attacked us.”

After Mizuki heard Gress’s story, her face turned blue. Perhaps she didn’t think there could be a story as cruel as that. *If the demons that were introduced to the girl often had friends, a bottomless (heretical doctrine?) pit thing, something about animals with help/salvation.*

Currently, everything was progressing like as if it were a story. *Including me, when there is a story-like development, there is often salvation, and we were still optimistic.*

However, the demons in this world are completely different from those in stories.

Although it was impossible to swallow the entire story, the fact remains that everything from the massacre to the complete annihilation of Noxiux was true, and they had to cross paths with such monsters.

“Then after that, according to the Salvation Church’s Oracle, the ruling demon changed to one called Nakshatra. He believes that if the demons are to be able to live freely, then humanity would need to be destroyed.”

“Countries that saw how dire the situation was each began to develop

their own countermeasures. But, Noxius had already fallen, and they were essentially forced to assume that according to the scale of the demon army, their ideas that would break the deadlock could not work and plans disappeared one by one. That is how much we humans lacked the power to fight against the indomitable wizards.”

Pausing here, Gress looked at (the grandiose) Reiji.

“Thus, from time immemorial, each nation has relied upon summoning a hero from a different world. Originally, only the Magic Guild and the Salvation Church were able to hold this hero summoning ceremony, and under their agreement, this ceremony was only to be held when humanity fell into a great crisis, establishing a firm precedent. If each country were to only prioritize its own national interest and hold the summoning, then the world would become chaotic.”

“This world has that many problems...?” Reiji scrunched his eyebrows. (I really can’t think of the actual phrase here; it’s like when you’re “wtf” and your eyebrows go up and together). *He might just start crying too if Demon Kings kept sprouting up.*

“Yes. According to what has been passed down, two monsters (giants) that eat every and any living thing have appeared twice. Tyrants have attempted to grasp the world in their hands three times. This time’s attack on the Demon King will make it six times in total. And to avoid a crisis of

this degree, Astel Kingdom is one of the four countries that is to perform the hero summoning ceremony.”

“Four countries...”

Upon hearing this unexpected news, Suimei started to mumble to himself.

They could possibly pressure some sorry other guys with such a ridiculous request as suppressing the demon king. When they refuse, they could always come up with some other safety measure, and Suimei and the others wouldn't have to be entrusted with an impossible task.

“And we are the summoned ones?”

When Reiji asked about the heart of the matter, Gless closed his eyes and confirmed.

“It is as you have said.”

And, Gless put on a grim face again.

“Currently, the demon army's invasion has slowed down, but in the near future, the human countries in the world, and thus our country, will be trampled down by the humongous demon army. Like how Noxius was

destroyed.”

Gless’s face lost its color, and his voice became heavy. It was an act that evoked sympathy. It was sly and somewhat disgusting, but if it the summoning was an international agreement, then failure would result not only in their loss of diplomatic face, but also in the loss of the people’s faith. *As the prime minister who had no choice but to worry over the country, he had no plan, and he couldn’t suppress the seeds of irritation in his mentality.*

After Gless had finished his story, seeing as good a time as any, the King spoke.

“Hero. This matter has absolutely nothing to do with you who came from another world, but, for the sake of saving this world’s people, can you somehow help?”

“....”

“Please...Somehow or another?”

The King implored a second time to Reiji, whose head was facing downwards as if in deep thought.

“The King is, well of course, determinedly asking Reiji,” thought Suimei.

But of course, Suimei, who didn’t want to have anything to do with this matter, secretly prayed for Reiji. Since he was a magician, for the sake of protecting both himself and his research, although he did have combat experience, did not really want to take part in such a ridiculous fight. He, of course, did not want to die.

Suimei, as if brushing aside his sliver of anxiety, earnestly prayed to the gods that Reiji would not accept.

Nobody dared to even gulp. After a brief period of silence, Reiji raised his resolute face.

And-

“I accept.”

“Of course. He won’t do it. He won’t — Wait what?” thought Suimei.

He accepted. He actually accepted. What Suimei had thought he heard was just a figment of his own imagination.

"Is that so! That's--"

"WAIT A SECONDDDDD!"

Suimei couldn't accept it. Completely drowning out the King's elated voice from before, his shout resounded throughout the audience room.

*Suimei revealed his inner thoughts with his shout, and stunned everyone in the audience room. Interrupting the King's voice was rude, but the abruptness of the shout and the incredulity of the people led to nobody to criticize Suimei.

The soft-hearted person who had accepted had a look of utter confusion on his face.

"Wha-what happened Suimei? Raising your voice so suddenly..."

"This dim-witted person! The one who accepted and has a rotten brain is you! You just said you'd fight a dangerous guy who'd destroy the world! Why do we have to fight a guy who has an army of god knows how many millions of demons!? Is it weird for me to shout out in a loud voice when you didnt even consult us about it!?"

Suimei had shouted incessantly, all without taking a breath. Reiji, with unyielding eyes, looked at Suimei who was now panting for breath.

"But, because of that Demon King, lots of people have had unfortunate experiences, and more will experience the same. Thus, the people's last resort was to summon a hero, and they called me. That's why I'll do anything and everything within my limits to help."

"How did it become like this!? We have absolutely no reason to help!"

"Yeah. It's undeniable that today is the first time we came to this world. It is as you said; we have no obligation to help. But there is hope. *Hope is the essence of every person. Aren't humans just a pile of hope?* Moreover, a sense of duty isn't present from the beginning; isn't it something you create?"

Reiji answered in a somewhat cool, philosophical manner. *no idea here*

"That is certainly true, but...Rather, that kind of philosophy has nothing to do with the matter at hand! First of all, how can you possibly do it by yourself!?"

Just now, the question thrust at him by Suimei stopped Reiji in his tracks. Reiji was just a student. Unlike Suimei's case, Reiji had no experience with fighting. Without even speaking of his ability to fight, any means to

win could not be seen.

But even then, Reiji shook his head.

"You don't understand. There's an amazing power in me right now. I might be able to defeat the Demon King if I have this power."

And thus, the matter was settled.

"What amazing powerrrrrr!?! There's no way you could even TRY to beat him! You're basically saying great things like "Let's fight against their huge numbers, Aniki!" indifferently! No matter how much power you have, there's no way you can fight against an army of several million!"

"No, I can't tell without having tried. The people who have been summoned into this world have the power to save it."

That is certainly what is said to be the case. *However, in the end, that might just be a story passed down by humanity.*

Thus.

"So that's how it is."

"This kind of result is unchangeable. I cannot abandon troubled people. It may not be smart, but I wish to cooperate with the people of this world."

"Reiji. Again, you..."

Suimei, upon hearing Reiji's sincere words, lowered his tone. After that, there may have been a hint of compassion. This could be said to be Reiji's weakness. He cannot neglect people in trouble. It's been like that since the olden days. He's been like that since the day Suimei had met him.

He would run about, trying to save someone, drag in someone else like him, but he would save everyone in the end. He was a man who could not discard this weakness. That is the person known as Shana Reiji.

Since he was his good friend, Suimei understood Reiji's character quite well.

"Suimei. If you think it's unpleasant, you don't have to. Honestly if you're with me, it's reassuring, but the one who received power is me. You don't have to come with me."

"You... Certainly, I don't want to go, but that...!"

"Yeah. I know. You'll worry about me right? You were always the one who followed up for me if I wasn't enough."

Saying it in such a way was kind of sneaky. Exactly since Reiji was this type of guy, Suimei could not ignore him and started to hang out with him.

But still, this time-

"I'm definitely not going. Dragging me into this kind of mess...I don't want to die yet."

As expected, he still declined. There was no choice. However one could think about it, it was too reckless.

"Okay. Sorry, Suimei."

"If you're going to apologize, you might as well not do it..." said Suimei, as if done speaking, with his voice having returned to that of one without surprise or resignation.

Now, Reiji turned to Mizuki.

"I'm going to go defeat the Demon King. Thus, I want you to stay with Suimei, Mizuki."

In front of the Reiji's display of determination, Mizuki's face was cast down, and she was shaking. She was thinking about something.

There was no reply for a brief period of time, but before long, Mizuki, who had stopped shaking, raised her resolute face and looked at Reiji.

"...No, I'll go with you."

"Mizuki..."

"You too, Mizuki," Suimei had said in a puzzled voice. He did not think another one of his friends would possibly say such an unrealistic thing. The same unrealistic thing as what Reiji had said.

"Mizuki, you can't. What I'm about to do is life-threatening. That's why I can't bring you with me. I don't want to put you in danger."

When Reiji had refused Mizuki's request, she shook her head.

"Since there won't be peace anyway if you don't defeat the Demon King, everywhere is dangerous. That's why, even if it's a little, I want to help you. I'm not sure if I can do anything or even if I understand, nor do I understand if I have the same feeling you do, to help the people of this world, but I still want to go with you."

"It'll be dangerous. I'm not sure if I'll be able to protect you."

"Okay. I won't mind even if you abandon me. So please..." That was undoubtedly not what Mizuki wanted. However, to stay with her important one, she had lied.

Reiji, after some consideration, spoke.

"Okay. If you're going so far as to say that, let's go together. However, I will never, no matter what happens, throw you away, okay?"

"Okay..." answered Mizuki. *no idea* She was happy, but in her eyes you could see a faint resolve, and some tears.*

"Your Majesty, the King. The matter concerning the Demon King, I will take on. The two of us will face him."

“Understood. Mizuki, are you really sure about this?”

“Yes!”

The King sent a happy-kind of like towards Mizuki who had responded so cheerfully, and then turned his gaze to Suimei.

“Suimei, you still...”

“I cannot fight against such an absurd amount of troops. I won’t go with them.”

“Is that so...” His voice had a somewhat apologetic tone, rather than one of regret. As expected, *he had somewhat mixed feelings regarding the summoning.*

Despite the King’s reaction, the surrounding criticized Suimei. Things like “Even though that girl is going, that boy...” and “He has no pride whatsoever” could be heard.

“These guys that don’t move out of their safe spots say whatever they like. Well, I’m not really in the position to say anything, since I decided I wouldn’t go... There’s a more important matter to attend to, after all.”

thought Suimei.

Suimei released his pent up frustration with a sigh, and paused for a bit, before asking the King for a favor he needed at any cost.

"Your Majesty, the King. I have but one favor to ask; may I?"

The surroundings became bustling with noise again, and such exclamations as "What insolence!" and "You're in no position to ask His Majesty the King for a favor!" but they were ignored.

The King, in particular, did not seem to mind; he did not raise his voice and responded.

"Go ahead."

"Okay. Since I won't go help suppress the Demon King, I want to find a way to return to our original world."

He would not go fight. Thus, there would be no reason for him to stop in this world. He wanted to use the summoning ceremony again to quickly return to his own world.

However, for some reason, the King did not reply.

“.....”

Instead, a heavy silence swept over the room. If one were to look at the surroundings, one would see Reiji with a puzzled look, and Mizuki with a face as if she had just realized something. Titania and Felmenia’s faces were of a poor complexion, and were as if they had just eaten a bug.

The source of this was something bad. Suimei had just asked to return. Then, their faces had become like this.

Then, a hypothesis had popped into Suimei’s mind.

“Hey, wait. It couldn’t be...”

Suimei no longer used honorifics. It was natural, as his guess did not hit far from the target.

Before long, the King opened his mouth with resolution.

“Sorry, but you cannot return to your original world. Don’t get me wrong; it’s not that I don’t want to return you. Rather, a method to send you back

does not exist.”

“What the FUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUCK!?”

Suimei’s second scream of the day resounded throughout the audience room.

Chapter 05

Until Friend's Departure

It's been two weeks since Suimei and his friends were summoned into this world and tasked with destroying the Demon Lord. Even now, Reiji is still undergoing training and will leave in a few days.

While the training is steadily progressing, Suimei is in a room reading books. Most of the genres are varied and almost everything he can get his hands on. The reason is of course to collect information about this world. He still remembers freshly the other day, when they were told that they can't return home. And so, they are forced to live here.

Even though he hated being summoned before, he doesn't care now, or more likely, he doesn't have the time to care. There are things he must do now no matter what.

That is, of course, collecting information.

The majority of the books he's studying include Law, Unwritten Law, Culture, Fundamental Knowledge, and the existence of the previous world. As mentioned before, they have to live here now. Resisting blending into this world's lifestyle will only bring trouble.

It's unknown whether it's caused by the Hero Summoning or not, but they can understand this world's language. Because of that, he can read the books. The information he has collected here has become quite a lot.

And then, the book Suimei is reading right now is about a hero who succeeded God's power and defeated the dragon that plunged the world into darkness. It seems this hero's story is an orthodox one that is widely known. While taking a breather, Suimei is reading this book.

It seems he became interested and didn't realize that he kept turning the pages until he finished it. Eventually, the hero destroyed the dragon and returned home and brought happiness to the world. It sure is a happy ending.

"Hero huh..." (Suimei)

Muttered Suimei while closing the book.

Well, setting aside this Hero, the current Hero right now is training with Mizuki who insisted upon going with him. They are now undergoing the training of Astel's Imperial Guard's Knight Captain and the Imperial Sorcerer. They got sword and combat training from the Knight Captain, and all kinds of magic from the Imperial Sorcerer.

Even though he felt that two weeks was unreasonable, he kept his mouth shut, in a good way.

"Haa..." (Suimei)

While thinking of Reiji, Suimei sighed.

Sometimes he can see the training from the window. He got the info from Reiji and Mizuki who visited him twice a day. From the info, though little, it seems harsh.

Reiji was just a normal human in the previous world. Of course, upon receiving sudden war training, he got beaten up. But, it seems this only applied for the first two days. On the third day, he was already able to fight on par with the Knight Captain, and able to handle multiple opponents.

Suimei didn't know if this is because of the Hero's Blessing or not, but the growth rate is unbelievable. If he were to put it, it's like a sponge. Not

how a sponge absorbs water, but how a sponge pumps out water.

Seeing that, of course, he felt his efforts were being denied, and felt sad.

"That's cheating, definitely." (Suimei)

It's remarkable, even in Magic. Reiji can do what took Suimei 2 years in just 3 days. Only 3 days!

Suimei didn't even want to look at it anymore.

"Mu..." (Suimei)

Suddenly, Suimei heard footsteps and felt a magic presence. It seems they are coming this way, it's probably visitors.

And the visitors are....

It seems it was Reiji and two others. The two others are Mizuki, and Titania who wants to help him all the time. This causes Mizuki to cling onto Reiji. Noticing that they are coming, Suimei quickly goes to the desk and conceals everything there with Magic.

The Suimei right now is always secluded in this room. Everyone thinks that he's always sleeping alone here. He limits contact with others to the minimum to conceal his identity. It's because if he's in contact with other people, the risk of getting caught is higher. Of course, he never attended the party on the second day. He always gets his food sent here anyway. He only leaves this room to go to the library, to the summoning room, to secretly check on Reiji, and, of course, the toilet.

It's a natural thing to do conceal his identity. He didn't want to get his power exploited.

He also didn't want Reiji to know. And he also got more freedom this way

anyway. In return, the castle's opinion of him has dropped drastically.

It's because he made a speech back then in the Audience Room to persuade Reiji from becoming the hero. And then he always holed up here. He's confident that the King and Titania are making fun of him.

Suimei doesn't care because it's a cover. And of course, he wants it to continue like that.

While thinking that, Suimei crawls up to the bed, and Reiji's voice can be heard.

"Morning Suimei, wake up yet?" (Reiji)

"Ah, come in." (Suimei)

"Excuse me." (Mizuki)

"Excuse me." (Reiji)

Suimei woke up and, as usual, they sit in their respective chairs.

"Then, what happened today?" (Suimei)

"Eh? That was sudden, Suimei." (Reiji)

"Somehow, you have a different atmosphere today." (Suimei)

"Hahaha, as expected, I'm busted?" (Reiji)

"I guess." (Suimei)

Reiji is laughing, embarrassed, and Suimei is nodding.

He noticed something was different when Reiji came in. Even if his face is bleeding a bit, Suimei can feel that Reiji experienced a good thing.

Then, Reiji asked.

"I learnt body strengthening magic today, wanna see?" (Reiji)

“Hoh? Show me.” (Suimei)

I see, that’s the reason. It seems he’s happy having learned a new magic. And I understand it well. People want to test it when they acquire new magic.

Reiji is stretching his body, and loosening up. It is body strengthening magic; it strengthens the whole body at the same time. Stretching like this is essential.

“Here I go.” (Reiji)

Then, Reiji spreads magic to his body, and surges it up in an instant without chanting.

“<Burn Boost>!” (Reiji)

When Reiji casts the magic, his body is suddenly covered in flame. He’s now even stronger than he was when he was summoned.

“Ohhh.” (Suimei)

Suimei lets out a voice of admiration upon seeing this. The execution is excellent. He handles the process very well. Even though it’s not really efficient, but to do this in two months is something admirable.

It looks like this magic is of the fire attribute. His power is amplified. Also, the wind attribute will hasten movement, the water attribute will smooth movement, and the earth attribute will harden the body.

Suimei is analyzing Reiji’s body strengthening magic. Titania is entranced by this sight and approaches him.

“As expected, Reiji-sama is awesome.” (Titania)

“Ahahaha. Thank you Tia.” (Reiji)

Said Reiji while smiling, and that name is like a pet name. When did they get this close?

Mizuki is pissed a bit seeing Titania.

"Tia, isn't that a bit too close?" (Mizuki)

"Isn't it fine Mizuki? Mizuki is always close to him, isn't it fine to let me this time?" (Titania)

"Eh? N-No! I'm not close to him!" (Mizuki)

"That's not true. Mizuki is always close to Reiji-sama. It's unfair." (Titania)

The topic was about Reiji's strengthening magic, but there's a spark between them.

"Hm, Reiji is quite cool huh..." (Suimei)

"Eh? That's right! This magic is convenient, I like it." (Reiji)

"It unexpectedly looks quite cool..." (Suimei)

This is Suimei's true opinion. It looks like dragon's flame. The impact shown on the other party is obvious. Be it admiration or fear. It's quite an advantage.

Thinking that, somehow Mizuki turns to Reiji, not me.

"I-I can do it too!" (Mizuki)

"Is that so? As expected, Mizuki is working hard as well." (Reiji)

"Um, well, yeah..." (Mizuki)

Suimei has a blank look hearing the response. It looks like because of Titania's actions, Mizuki can no longer see anyone besides Reiji.

"Kukukuku..." (Suimei)

"Wh-What's the matter Suimei-kun?" (Mizuki)

"Ah, it's nothing, good luck." (Suimei)

"Yeah, I won't lose!" (Mizuki)

When he thinks about the talk that one of them will become the Demon Lord, it seems impossible watching this situation.

After that, I try to ask again.

"Then, what else?" (Suimei)

"Eh? Well, various things..." (Reiji)

Reiji answers that while averting his eyes, it seems this is the cause of what Suimei felt.

"What's wrong, Reiji-sama?" (Titania)

"Eh? It's nothing." (Reiji)

"Ojou-sama, is there anything strange that happened?" (Suimei)

"Eh? I don't think anything happened. More like that Reiji-sama got another cool thing." (Titania)

It seems the princess didn't lie. Then, what made Reiji like this? Why is he trying to deceive us?

I asked Titania the details.

"That is?" (Suimei)

"Eh? That is..." (Titania)

Reiji tried to stop her, but Titania continued, trying to brag.

"All magicians from Astel's guild's specialists came to practice with Reiji-sama." (Titania)

"Eh~ Magician Guild huh..." (Suimei)

Magician Guild. Though I haven't researched the details, it's true that it exists.

"And because of that, everyone gathered to welcome them." (Titania)

The specialists are probably the executives there.

"Is it that rare?" (Suimei)

"Yes. That's because they have their own business." (Titania)

That's why it's rare for them to gather. The various specialists are more interesting.

"By the way, what do you mean by various?" (Suimei)

"Fire, water, wind, earth, thunder, wood, light. They are the best of them.

They can easily surpass our magicians. And they each have their own Emperor nickname. Like the Emperor of Fire or Emperor of Light."

(Titania)

"....." (Suimei)

Is it fine? Emperor is a great name even in Japan. Even though there might be error since the language here has been converted into Japanese, it's still great.

"Suimei-sama, are you interested?" (Titania)

"Then, who won?" (Suimei)

"Of course, it was Reiji-sama's victory!" (Titania)

Titania happily brags about it.

"And then, he got a title from the Guildmaster." (Titania)

"A title?" (Suimei)

A title is something that represents a person's achievements, strength, or features. Of course, this is only in fantasy.

Reiji is embarrassed and tries to change the topic.

"Isn't it fine not to tell him?" (Reiji)

But, seeing Reiji like that, Mizuki snickers.

"Fufufufu." (Mizuki)

"What's wrong Mizuki?" (Suimei)

"No, it's nothing." (Mizuki)

"Then, Princess, what's the title?" (Suimei)

"Suimei, please..." (Reiji)

"Because he conquered all elements, he is called the 'Supreme Ruler of All Elements'." (Titania)

The moment she says that, the room is silent. But, Suimei can't hold it.

"Buhohohoho" (Suimei)

"Suimei-sama!?" (Titania)

"Ah, Supreme Ruler, of, all elements, ah, I can't take it, help me, hahahahahahahahahahahahhaa!" (Suimei)

Titania is confused as to why he's laughing. Reiji can only shake his head and Mizuki is laughing too.

While Suimei is laughing, Reiji says.

"See? I told you." (Reiji)

"Hm? Why? Receiving a title from the Guildmaster is a great thing. Why are Suimei-sama and Mizuki-sama laughing?" (Titania)

"Bu-But, it's 'Supreme Ruler of All Elements' you know? Just hear it, it's got no sense, it's got... Ah, my stomach hurts. Fuahahahahahahaha."
(Suimei)

"Suimei, please, stop it..." (Reiji)

The laughter echoes and the story ends here...

"North building... Nothing strange..." (???)

Eji, with the military boots, is patrolling. Eji is checking the last room at the north building.

That's right. That night, Eji was patrolling. This is the daily task every night. The job is to defend the castle at night when everyone is sleeping.

Camelia is different between day and night. At day, it's bright. At night, it's completely different. Usually, they have candles, but as to boost the economy, now, it's all not lit up.

The only light is the one in Eji's hand. And Eji has to go patrolling in the darkness. Nobody wants this job since it's creepy. Eji is forced to do this job and has to remember every nook and cranny.

"I hope it'll end soon..." (Eji)

Anyway, it would be stupid if anyone tried to invade this place with the hero in it.

The king himself issued Eji to strengthen the security.

Eji also once saw the hero's training. It's very harsh. The hero Reiji fought against the Knight Captain and now he can defeat many men easily.

So, even though it's the hero, they are afraid and want to strengthen security, since their best men have been defeated. Though, Eji saw this as unreasonable.

That time, Eji saw a human figure.

"Hm?" (Eji)

Eji heard the sound of metal, and immediately turned the candle to the source.

"Is there anyone there?"(Eji)

There's no response. What's left is only the spooky room mages use.

Eji has been here before. There was nothing strange. But, back then, there was a metal statue.

"Peter? Is that you? Stop the bad prank."(Eji)

Eji anxiously called the name of his friend that usually pulls pranks. He tried to look ahead, but it's all painted black. And he can't hear his friend's usual laughter.

Then, the similar "GASHAN" sound is heard again.

Eji's back is trembling. Could it be? An intruder? Even his friend wouldn't go this far. Eji wouldn't know where it got the info from, but it might be a demon trying to kill the Hero. Eji drew his sword and slowly approached. Eji also prepared a flute to call reinforcements in the worst case. And then-

"What? Hmph, there's nothing." (Eji)

It's only the statue in front of the room. Well, there's no way a demon would be here anyway. It's only natural.

In the first place, there's no way anything would be crawling in the castle at night, other than Eji. Having confirmed that, Eji felt tired and went to bed.

"Whoa, that was close..." (Suimei)

Suimei waved his hand in front of the sleeping Eji, and felt relieved.

He never thought he'd meet a guard here. The guard is not a magician, just a normal human. He should not be able to get caught practicing magic here, though he didn't expect anyone to be awake.

In the first place, the source of the issue was the armor beside him...

"No no, to think they left an automaton here. There was nothing before..."
(Suimei)

For safety, Suimei took another glance at the armor.

Automata are golems that have imitations of built-in organic functions. They can be programmed to perform automated actions. Like androids. It's one of the mysteries of Hebrew and Kaballah in the previous world. There's no technique there to create it. Setting that aside,

When Suimei touched it, it was disassembled and became scraps. Loud noises were created, but everybody was sleeping, so no one came.

Suimei sighed. The first noise was when he got near the armor, and the second one was when he destroyed it.

(But, it sure is quite well made. I've never seen something like this before coming here. It's like it's not something the people here created...)
(Suimei)

But, where did they get this? When he came here, he realized its

existence. He noticed the risks. – This is quite well-made.

The automaton absorbs magic from nearby intruders. It's a good counter against magic and physical attacks. It also has a sword which makes it aggressive and powerful.

Cool, and cruel...

"But, that girl, seriously, what's she's thinking? Just because this is inside the castle, she did something like this. She's got no sense of responsibility." (Suimei)

He complained to the non-existent Felmenia. Even if they are both magicians. To think that she'd prepare a trap like this. Where is the service they boast? Now that the great me has come, I won't show any mercy.

"Ah... I guess it's natural for a mage..." (Suimei)

That's right. Magicians are magicians. You can target their research, and in return, they will try to kill you. It's common sense here. Though he doesn't know that for sure.

He looked again to the remains of the armor... It's alright if it's Felmenia, but it's bad if anyone else finds it and makes ruckus.

"Kay, let's fix it..." (Suimei)

Magic surged from his feet. A red circle was created below him. The magic circle rotated and became bigger. After connecting several strings, it stabilized.

And then-

"<Renovatio Redivivus>" (Suimei)

“Rather than a repair, it’s more like returning it to its previous state. The circle separated into two from below the armor. It rotated and flew up. The parts return back to their original places. When the magic circle reached the top, the armor was back again.

“Good. Just like before. Not good, not bad.” (Suimei)

Bragging a little about his magic, he tapped the automaton. It can’t move anymore. Since the magic inside is already destroyed, this is nothing but a wreck shaped like the automaton.

Suimei entered the room the automaton was guarding; it was another room other than the archive room.

That’s right. It’s the summoning room.

The purpose was to analyze the summoning circle and find a way to reverse it. If that can’t be done, he just has to make it himself. And now, he’s rummaging through the summoning research book.

I want to return. I have a duty to my father. To achieve it, it’s best to return there with the research results, magic items, and research materials.

Even though he’s sure he can do anything here if given the time, he doesn’t want to waste anything. He doesn’t know if he can make it there in time. Time is scarce. That’s why the top priority is to return home.

That’s right, and the other reason is...

“They both also want to return right...” (Suimei)

Said Suimei with a faint voice, while looking up the ceiling.

Suimei knew that Reiji sometimes looked up at the sky. Suimei knew that

he had lingering affection for the people he left there.

He also knew that Mizuki was always sobbing alone in her room, wanting to be at the side of her loved ones, despite the fear, to stop the loneliness.

While thinking that, something came up in Suimei's heart.

He couldn't describe it, it was something hot... That morning he was supposed to meet his family. Those people that he can't meet again. Embracing the sadness and sorrow. He knew he would have to say goodbye someday, but as long there is hope, he won't give up.

That's why he learned magic from his father, to overcome anything no matter how unreasonable.

"This is not like me, well, I guess I have to work hard." (Suimei)

He was determined. He can't take it back once he said it. That's why he said it. Since he won't be going with them, he swore to find alternatives.

While he's determined, a magic presence could be felt...

Even if they tried to hide it, it's a human presence. No. It was not a normal person. It was Felmenia Stingray. She stood out in front of the automaton and then came in. It seems she saw the opened door.

He knew she was tailing him and purposefully left a trail. But to think she was this persistent...

Maybe she's observing me...

She peeked for a while, and then left...

Then...

"The bait is effective, next is the timing stage huh..." (Suimei)

That's right. This is an appropriate punishment for dogs who like to sniff. They also intend to punish me anyway. In return, their surprised faces will be funny...

Chapter 06

The Court Mage's Doubt

It has been two days since Hero Reiji accepted the task to subdue the Demon Lord. Imperial Mage Felmenia Stingray will be teaching Reiji and Mizuki by order of the king.

And now, she's going to Reiji.

"It can't be... Hero's teacher..." (Felmenia)

She's grumbling while walking, but inside her heart there is joy. After all, out of all the senior mages, she was chosen to teach the hero who will save the world.

To think that she will be teaching the Hero, she can only chuckle. This means that she is trusted more than the other Court Mages, and that the King has high expectations of her.

"Fufufufu." (Felmenia)

She can't hold her laughter. She's glad there's no one around. She always has a serious persona, if the others see her laughing, it would be very embarrassing.

Setting that aside, on the subject of teaching, it seems that in the world Hero Reiji came from, there's no magic. That's why we're teaching him magic now. She can still remember when they were summoned, and when they saw magic for the first time. She clearly remembers their sparkling eyes.

When she asked about Hero Reiji's world, it seems in exchange for Magic, they have a science called technology that everybody can use. It helped

the civilization evolve. It was interesting. If they have time, Felmenia would like to hear more.

And then-

“Is that Suimei?” (Felmenia)

In the corridor, standing there, is Suimei.

Suimei Yakagi. An average person. Black hair, gentle eyes. Nothing more than that. He shows great wisdom when he’s together with Reiji. That guy is walking ahead of her, but turns at the corner towards a different destination.

While seeing this, she thinks. The place he’s going is the north side of Camelia. There’s no kitchen nor toilet nor Reiji there. Why the hell is he going that way?

(Wait... I heard that Suimei was always holed up in his room after that dispute in the audience chamber.) (Felmenia)

She doesn’t know much about his circumstances since she hasn’t talked with him much. She heard that he only leaves to go to the toilet or to meet with Reiji and his friend.

She thought that, because he was summoned here suddenly, he was scared and holed up like a little boy.

“If so, what is he...” (Felmenia)

The north building is a place that people rarely go. Seeing this, Felmenia becomes interested.

Then, she realizes something.

(There’s still time until the meeting. Then, I guess I will take a look for a

bit.) (Felmenia)

And so, Felmenia decides to follow him. It's not only because she's interested, it's also because she has the responsibility to stop him from doing anything bad.

Not only that, that boy Suimei is keeping secrets to himself. That's why she has to watch his movements.

(That's right, when we greeted them, Suimei-dono was certainly...)

(Felmenia)

That time, he tried to use magic. Out of those three, he's the only one who could use magic. No one noticed this but her.

But, the magic was canceled right away, and he pretended nothing happened.

But, there's no mistake, it was magic.

Hero Reiji said that there was no magic in his world. In exchange, technology spread all over the place and helped civilization. Buildings were lined up neatly, and they could travel to the moon.

There were no lies in his eyes, nor was there any need to lie. That's why, why can Suimei use magic?

And now, the pursuit begins. Of course, Suimei didn't notice. He just kept walking towards his place of interest.

Then, when she turned at the corner..

"Tsu~"

"Kyaa!?" (Maid)

There were screams. It seems it was the maid. That scream must have

been from her.

"I'm sorry, is anything hurt?" (Felmenia)

"I should be the one to apologize. I hope I didn't hurt Stingray-sama's beautiful face." (Maid)

"Eh? There's nothing on my face." (Felmenia)

"Then, in any other place?" (Maid)

"No. There's not even any dust left." (Felmenia)

Having seen the maid's exaggerated attitude, she smiled.

The maid put on a relieved face.

"Is that so? That's great." (Maid)

"Then, excuse me." (Felmenia)

"Y-Yes!" (Maid)

"Fumu." (Felmenia)

It wasn't the wisdom that comes with age, but what she learned, to have dignity as a Court Mage.

Having seen her blunder, the maid bowed.

"I-I'm really sorry!" (Maid)

"Haha, it's alright." (Felmenia)

The maid bowed again, and then, when Felmenia wanted to leave, Felmenia realized suddenly.

"Excuse me, can I have a moment?" (Felmenia)

"Yes? S-Sure." (Maid)

"Before we hit each other, there was supposed to be another person that went through here, did you see him?" (Felmenia)

"Eh? There was no one but Stingray-sama." (Maid)

"What?" (Felmenia)

Unlike the normal Felmenia, having heard the maid's answer, she muttered...

"Is there anything wrong?" (Maid)

"I will ask again, is there really no one else that passed through here?" (Felmenia)

"Y-Yes." (Maid)

"You're not lying?" (Felmenia)

"Yes. I swear to God Alshuna. It's exactly as I told Stingray-sama" (Maid)

Felmenia threatened her, and the maid avowed, though Felmenia wouldn't use any physical force.

And then, Felmenia interrupted.

"There's no way you didn't meet anyone. Before we crashed, Suimeido... I mean, Hero Reiji's friend came through here." (Felmenia)

"Hero's friend? But, I didn't meet anyone." (Maid)

Seeing the bewildered maid, Felmenia thought...

"What does this mean..." (Felmenia)

"Hm, Stingray-sama, I must go to the south tower..." (Maid)

"Ah, it's okay, you can go. Sorry for saying something strange." (Felmenia)

"It's alright, then, I'll go." (Maid)

The maid bowed and left.

(.....) (Felmenia)

Felmenia was confused.

She didn't know what happened, but he disappeared right after turning.
It's a mystery.

(Hm, there's still time, let's look inside.) (Felmenia)

While walking, she didn't meet anyone.

When she arrived at the north tower, she was surprised.

(Wha-) (Felmenia)

She found the door opened. There wasn't supposed be anyone coming here. Not only that, this door was sealed. It requires special magic to open it and yet... The only ones who know the spell are the King, the head mage, and me....

There's no trail of the King or head mage having been here, then why has it opened?

Felmenia erased her presence and went to the door. Due to this series of events, she couldn't help but be very nervous.

Felmenia stood and peeked inside. She could only see a figure standing there, carrying both a notebook about summoning, which is rarely seen in Astel, and something cylindrical.

(As expected...) (Felmenia)

She didn't know how the hell he opened the door, but by the fact that he

is here, it's evident that he's a mage.

But-

(Gu- What should I do? Can I just go in right now?) (Felmenia)

This is a restricted place, normally she would show up right away, but this is the hero's friend, and furthermore, a mage.

Of course, she is confident that she could subdue him, but this is the hero's friend. It would become a big commotion. What if the Demon Lord subjugation is canceled because of this?

She couldn't decide.

But, I wonder, what is he doing...

(I guess he's researching about the summoning, but...) (Felmenia)

But, as they are both mages, she wondered why he was wandering around... normally to analyze a magic circle, a mage would need to stand there and analyze the circle only. She couldn't see him as anything but a normal person who doesn't know magic and isn't sure what to do.

But, the summoning circle itself is something that we don't understand ourselves, we can only use it. No one has been able to understand it.

In the end, Felmenia couldn't even let her voice out, or move. And after watching Suimei's weird behavior, she decided to go to the meeting instead.

"About Hero Reiji's friend?" (King)

Felmenia is now standing in front of the king in the audience chamber. The reason is, of course, Suimei. After that day, she tried to watch him. And now, she intends to ask the king.

The king is confused and the kneeling Felmenia nods.

"Yes. That's right." (Felmenia)

"Is it Mizuki Anou?" (King)

"No, it's the other one, Suimei." (Felmenia)

The King squints his eyes.

"From what I know, that one is holed up in his room and never comes out." (King)

"No. He has actually left the room numerous times." (Felmenia)

This is the result of Felmenia's searching. She found out that Suimei has gone out countless times. And, of course, no one knew.

Contrary to his deception, he's actually pretty active.

Hearing that, the king raises his voice.

"I haven't heard that from anyone." (King)

"It's because the seclusion is glorified. He's moving in secret." (Felmenia)

"No one has seen him?" (King)

"I suspect, I'm the only one who knows." (Felmenia)

That's right, there's no one but her. When she asked others, they insisted that he's never left.

"Then, why are you the only one who knows?" (King)

"I only met him walking by pure chance. It seems, he's using magic when no one is around." (Felmenia)

"Magic? Is it something you taught him?" (King)

"No. It's something he knew beforehand." (Felmenia)

The king is making a face of disbelief.

"But, I heard there's no magic there. Magic is just something from fantasy in Hero Reiji's world." (King)

"I also suspect that. But it's true that Suimei-dono used magic."
(Felmenia)

"Then, Hero Reiji lied?" (King)

"No, I don't think so." (Felmenia)

Nope. It's not a lie. It is true that Hero Reiji has a very high aptitude for magic, but he didn't know it before. And the king trusts him too.

"I believe so, but..." (King)

"Why is there a discrepancy in their story... right?" (Felmenia)

"That boy personally concealed his magic, and in the first place, the Hero didn't know of magic before." (King)

As expected, the king also tilts his head. Magic is a technology. Magic is inseparable from life. Magic allows people to evolve.

Even if it's unknown there, it's supposed to be no different than a technology in terms of usefulness.

"Your Highness, there might be a complex situation in the other world, but right now-" (Felmenia)

"The thing is, why is he doing so much to conceal his activities and magic?" (King)

"Yes." (Felmenia)

"Their movement is unrestricted, and since he just came to this world, there should be nothing to hide. Then, why? There's no reason to..."

(King)

That's right; he is the hero's friend. The king even ordered the castle to be friendly with them and cooperate.

But...

"The problem is, where Suimei-dono goes..." (Felmenia)

"Where is it?" (King)

"Archive room. He has brought back several books from there."

(Felmenia)

"Hoh? I thought he only holed up in his room, to think that he goes there, since he can't return, he's probably trying to search for information."

(King)

When the king hears "archive room", he is surprised, but then he just nods.

He thinks that Suimei doesn't want to lose to the absurdity of the summons, and wants to study.

The king admires him a bit.

That's true, but there's more.

"No. There's also evidence of him going to the forbidden room."

(Felmenia)

"Wh-What? But, it's not easy to go in there..." (King)

It's where the historically important data is stored. Therefore, it's forbidden and out of peoples' reach.

"Furthermore, with ease..." (Felmenia)

"Wha-, then he only goes out and comes back from there?" (King)

Felmenia takes a breath and continues...

"Even to the summoning room." (Felmenia)

"That's impossible. The only ones who can enter it are me, the head mage, and you." (King)

"Yes. But, somehow, Suimei can open it." (Felmenia)

The atmosphere is heavy. The door is layered with multiple earth magics. Only people who have a great understanding of the earth attribute can open it.

That shows the extent of Suimei's magic.

"What is he doing there...? Is a stupid question to ask, huh... Is he researching the summoning?" (King)

"I don't know, but I think that's right." (Felmenia)

"He wants to return that much, huh..." (King)

The king has a depressed expression, he feels guilty for calling them without their consent. A kind king.

It seems, the King opposed the idea of calling the Hero. He didn't want to involve those other people that have nothing to do with this. He wanted them to succeed with their own power, but they will face many situations like this, and the world will eventually be destroyed.

However, he eventually feared the demon lord, and had no choice but to agree. The king tasted despair. And, then the king said heavily.

"Then, Felmenia, why are you not doing anything about it?" (King)

"Yes. I approached him by my own judgment, and if he causes an uproar.. (Felmenia)

"I see. It's true that there might be a commotion." (King)

"Yes. And the information is still not enough." (Felmenia)

That's right, this information is still unreliable. It could be a misunderstanding. That's why she only spoke to the king.

"That's true. You will take action when something happens, right?" (King)

"Yes, of course." (Felmenia)

That much is obvious. That's why she's observing this much.

"And then, have you spoken to anyone else about this?" (King)

"No, only to you, the king." (Felmenia)

"Good. Don't speak of this to anyone until this is resolved." (King)

"Yes." (Felmenia)

The king wishes for no one to know about this, though Felmenia does not know why, she will obey.

And then, Felmenia asks about the plan.

"Your Highness, what should I do from now on?" (Felmenia)

She asks this because she doesn't know what to do with Suimei. But, she must do something, even if he is the hero's friend.

The king tilts his head.

"Mu? Isn't it fine to leave him? He doesn't want to be bothered. That's why he's doing it secretly. As long as he doesn't intend to do anything

bad.” (King)

“But, it’s a forbidden place...” (Felmenia)

“Since he already went there, it can’t be helped. There are only important books and maps, not that he can do anything with them.” (King)

It’s true that it’s useless since he’s from a different world, but she still feels that the judgment is too soft. No-

(Is that the reason Your Highness didn’t want anyone to know?)

(Felmenia)

If the people know, it will become an uproar, but if they don’t know, it’s alright.

That’s why the king told her not to tell anyone...

The king’s decision is correct. Though she still feels bitter about the idea.

“Then, Your Highness won’t take any measures against him?” (Felmenia)

“Do you oppose?” (King)

“Suimei is a mage. There has to be some kind of action taken. I know that it’s best not to involve the Hero’s party, but if he is let free, it will affect the king’s image...” (Felmenia)

“Personally, I don’t care.” (King)

From the King’s expression, it seems he wants to resolve this matter as soon as possible.

But, for her to back down here, it would be unbecoming of the title of Court Mage.

“Your Highness, this is somewhat a measure, but I won’t do anything to

scare them. If something happens, I will personally tell Reiji-dono."

(Felmenia)

"You have some confidence in persuasion." (King)

"Even if it's short, I'm still his teacher. He won't ignore my words."

(Felmenia)

Felmenia has some confidence, because she is the one who taught Reiji magic. If she says that his friend is doing bad things, he would have to do something about it. From their talks, she knows that Reiji hates bad people.

No problem. That's why, for now...

"That's why, I only need Your Highness' approval..." (Felmenia)

After thinking for a while, the king lets out a voice with a serious tone.

"No." (King)

"Your Highness! But!" (Felmenia)

"Felmenia, Suimei-dono is an important guest of mine too. I can't allow you to harbor any ill intentions towards him." (King)

"I-I don't have any ill intentions. I only want to take appropriate measures against he who is freely doing as he pleases!" (Felmenia)

Felmenia tries to persuade the King, but the King calmly points it out again.

"A no is a no. Got it, Felmenia?" (King)

"...." (Felmenia)

"Got it?" (King)

“Understood.” (Felmenia)

Felmenia clenches her fist and bows.

It's been a while since things haven't gone her way. Since she became Court Mage, it's been a while.

The opponent is also a mage, which is frustrating. Even though she was rejected, she only becomes angrier and promises to pay him back ten thousand-fold.

(Not yet!) (Felmenia)

Even if the king doesn't approve, she won't back down. This is the court, the king's territory. She can't do as she pleases here. Basically, it's fine as long as the king doesn't know. She will secretly punish Suimei if something happens.

Yes, this can work. Suimei still hasn't noticed her, and if she does it secretly, no one will know.

Even if the opponent is a mage from somewhere she doesn't know. She can't allow insolent acts in Camelia. It's unforgiveable, and thus it should not be forgiven. From her position, this is her responsibility.

The king's image, the safety of Camelia, it's her self-proclaimed duty to protect them. Even if no one else will ever know, she doesn't care. She will make that insolent boy know his place.

“*sigh* Felmenia is still young huh...” (King)

Said the king, Almadius, after Felmenia left.

He could see Felmenia's youth will instigate something. She won't give up. She will do something without others knowing.

Well, it can't be helped. I'm sorry for the boy, but I guess I can just scold her later.

"Wisdom is a difficult thing huh..." (King)

Recently, Felmenia has been so prideful. It's unknown whether it's because of her strength or her duty. It's true that she's too strong.

The King sighed again.

(TL Note: Now we know who will cry when got bullied. Such a petty pride. Muehehehehe.)

Chapter 07

Can't go against the gap in power

That night, Astel's King Almadius was standing in front of the north building in the deepest part of Camelia. Felmenia was standing in silence.

(This is... What...) (Felmenia)

She could only let out such words of embarrassment. The cause was none other than the armor in front of her. This armor that was placed here was created by a rather famous mage, even among the mages in Astel's history. A golem capable of moving on its own. It was produced by the great sage that had a big role in developing Camelia. This product was something that he could only create once a lifetime.

Why was this thing here? Of course, it was placed by Felmenia to "stop" Suimei Yakagi. It's something she brought out from the treasury.

She thought that Suimei would come here again. But, when the guard's patrol was over, the golem was standing still... That's why they thought he hadn't come, but, then why was the door open...

When she checked the immobile golem, it seemed that the golem had been reduced to nothing but a wreck with the appearance of a golem.

(What a cruel thing to do to this golem...) (Felmenia)

Muttered Felmenia, while shocked...

There's no doubt that the golem was activated. She had already checked its functionality before, even though this was an artifact, it was as good as new.

If it has been activated, then it must have encountered Suimei. But, there's no trace of battle anywhere. Impossible... The golem was made for defensive purposes. When Felmenia tested it too, its functions couldn't be easily disabled.

Then, how did he reduce it to this state? The inside was literally destroyed, only its appearance has been maintained.

What magic did he use to fix it? Even if he destroyed it by force, it couldn't be like this. There's no trace of magic, and the situation has made clear that the golem is okay.

The culprit was standing and wandering about the room. It was as if he didn't even care about Felmenia.

(Fuck.) (Felmenia)

Due to her wild imagination, she uttered a word she had never used before. Such vulgar language. Felmenia Stingray, who was considered a genius, the youngest to ever climb to the rank of court mage, could no longer restrain herself. She was outraged. Even though she knew that he didn't even notice her, she couldn't hold it in. She won't let anyone underestimate a court mage.

(Fine, bring it on. I will make you reflect on your foolish actions. I will show you the true depths of magic you don't know. I will let you taste it. Definitely.) (Felmenia)

Inside this girl who is called White Flame, a Dark Flame was burning. She had become obsessed, and lost sight of what's right and wrong.

That's right, as of this moment, her sense of duty, responsibility, and her beliefs had been blinded by her pride.

To the boy from another world that left his back wide open, she muttered.

(Suimei Yakagi, I will show you the true strength of the White Flame.)
(Felmenia)

While she muttered that, she had no way of knowing of the despair that would soon destroy her pride. (TL Note: Muehehehehehe)

That night, a few days after the golem incident, when everyone was asleep in Camelia, Felmenia was tailing the lone boy.

She took this chance when he was secretly taking a stroll. She would deliver the hammer of judgment upon this boy who neglected the king's authority. She put a reasonable distance between them, and continued the chase.

Of course, like always, there was no way Suimei could have noticed her. She always used wind magic to erase her footsteps and fatigue. And if she used concealment magic to erase her presence, there's no way anyone could notice. Anyone.

Suimei, without any hesitation, strolled in the darkness. It seemed he was going to a different place this time. He was wearing something they called "Blazer" that seemed to be their school uniform or some sort.

He seemed to be wandering aimlessly. Even though Felmenia didn't know where he was going, she intended to show up herself and personally deliver judgment.

(Tsu~!) (Felmenia)

There was a shadowy figure nearby. There wasn't supposed to be anyone awake. Who the hell...

But, it might've just been her imagination. If one thought normally, there was no one other than Eji who would go for a walk this late. Then, she tried to chase Suimei once again.

"He disappeared!?" (Felmenia)

There was no way for their eyes to have met. The moment she lost him, he erased his presence.

Even though he was supposed to be just ahead according to his walking speed, there was no sight of him.

But, if she couldn't see him, she could just search for him.

She instantly gathered magic and cast wind magic.

"Oh, wind. Become my servant. Show me the knowledge I seek. <Wind Search>!" (Felmenia)

What she chanted was wind magic. It would allow her to find the information she wanted.

Soon, she could hear the footsteps. It was quite far, but not that far. There was a weird fixed rhythm in the steps. Without any further thought, she continued her chase.

“Here huh... Mu?” (Felmenia)

While running, she realized something.

(Wait... What lies ahead is...) (Felmenia)

Noticing the destination, she grew even angrier. The destination was the White Garden (白亜の庭園), which was the most prestigious place in Camelia.

Here is the place where the king spends his private time. It’s not a place where you can just walk in. She couldn’t take it anymore, she chased him while stomping the floor.

Beyond the stone passage, she went through a little garden and moved forward. She swore to punish him. When she went through the last passage, she was dazzled a bit by the moonlight. She began to accumulate her magic, and moved forward.

There, stood a lone mage.

The White Garden. Beside the tall obelisk in the center stood a boy, gazing at the stars, Suimei Yakagi.

The black sky, stretching from heaven to earth, and earth to heaven. A spectacular scene. With the moon covered in the dark night. The air was cold.

It was unknown as to when he changed his clothes, the "blazer" from back then was gone. His outfit had changed to "covered in black". A flawless one-dress that can make one mistake his figure.

"Well, well, I don't think chasing someone and sniffing around is a good hobby you know? Those who do that are just stupid and pathetic stray sheep that know nothing you know?" (Suimei)

He smirked fearlessly. It seemed that he knew all along. It was like leading a lost child. He said that with a face of ridicule.

"No way... You knew?" (Felmenia)

“Well, if someone chases you with such pathetic skills, it’s weirder not to notice it.” (Suimei)

“.....!” (Felmenia)

He said that, implying that it was a natural thing to notice her tailing him. To think that he could see through her perfect concealment magic. It was unexpected.

That means that this time, it was an invitation.

She grinded her teeth. This was the first time she had felt so humiliated. She couldn’t accept the fact that she’d been dancing in his palm all along. She was very angry. She was invited here. While still on guard due to this unexpected situation, she raised her voice to him.

“Then, you bastard, what do you intend to do?” (Felmenia)

“I don’t have any plan. I was just taking a stroll. There’s no rule that forbids people from leaving their rooms at night, right? That’s why, for just this time, I tried to go to place I have never been before.” (Suimei)

“Do you think you can deceive me with such reasoning? If you noticed me, why did you come here?” (Felmenia)

She couldn't hide her frustration, since she got busted. Then, Suimei laughed mischievously instead.

"As expected, it failed, huh? Hahaha." (Suimei)

"I will ask again, why did you come to this place?" (Felmenia)

"I wonder why... That's because..." (Suimei)

As expected, he only laughed. As if he was having fun because it was all going as he'd predicted. He stared at her with eyes that told her he saw through it all.

"That is, the same reason as you. Right?" (Suimei)

"....." (Felmenia)

"Oh? You chose to shut up? I was quite certain that it was the case. I wonder if I was wrong..." (Suimei)

While saying that, moving his hand as if he were accustomed to it, he put on his black glove. There was nothing to be said anymore. She was

frustrated that her plan got busted. To hide her frustration, she tried to change the topic.

"You bastard, where did you get those clothes?" (Felmenia)

Yeah, she had never seen those clothes before. The coat was long and pitch black. Beneath it, he wore a strongly woven decorative white shirt. And black trousers. That kind of clothing.

"Ah! This suit? I always wear this as my battle uniform." (Suimei)

"You always wear it? But, during the summoning, you didn't wear anything like that!" (Felmenia)

"It was in my bag. You saw my belongings right?" (Suimei)

Try to remember. It's true that she kept the belongings of those three before.

But,

"There's no way such clothes would fit into the container!" (Felmenia)

“Oi, no matter how much you use those remarks, it only makes you seem hard-headed you know?” (Suimei) (TL Note: Implying she’s stupid.)

He shrugged with annoyance. That’s right... He’s a mage...

“I see. Magic tools huh?” (Felmenia)

“Though somehow it seems like a random answer, but well, yeah, correct. Though it looks like this, I use it a lot. This is one of my favorites you know?” (Suimei)

Suimei bragged a little. Magic tools: tools that hold power. Normally, a magic tool can demonstrate impossible power. It’s true that if that were the case, it would make sense. But, she had never heard of a magic tool to increase storage capacity. She thought that it couldn’t be applied by any of the eight attributes. But, if he has that kind of magic tool, it’s probably natural to brag about it.

After bragging about his bag and putting on his glove, he fixed his coat collar, and then interrupted daringly.

“Well, well, the night is nigh, shall we begin?” (Suimei)

“Don’t joke with me. This is His Highness’ special garden. Do you think a fight would be allowed here?” (Felmenia)

The White Garden. Fighting here would be an insolent act. Thus, she glared at him. But, Suimei only laughed and sneered.

“Heh... the White Garden huh? It’s true that it’s a bright place befitting of its name. But, do you really think this is the White Garden?” (Suimei)

“What are you talking about? The garden beside you and the white obelisk in the center are already proof. The garden here is filled with seeds from all over the kingdom. And what the king likes the most is, the spire..... Ah!” (Felmenia)

There was nothing there. It was supposed to be there. But, not even a shadow was left. She panicked right away. Realizing that, Suimei spoke so as to ridicule her.

“What’s wrong? There’s nothing on your left though? That thing that you probably want to talk about, is on your right though?” (Suimei)

After it was pointed out, she turned right away.

"Ridiculous, The king's room is supposed to be on the left side, why, why is it on the right side!?" (Felmenia)

The tower was there. She couldn't respond to this mysterious phenomenon. There was no reason. It was impossible. Just like he said, it was on her right.

Confusion and questions filled her head, what was going on? The throne tower was supposed to be on her left, though she never really goes there, she was certain. But now, it was on the right. What was going on?

Then, Suimei said while closing his eyes.

"That's right. There are two answers I can think up. It's either that you were mistaken, or, this is not the White Garden." (Suimei)

"That's ridiculous, there's no way..." (Felmenia)

"Is that so? Then why has the spire changed from your left to your right? Why does the moon rise from the right? Does this garden reverse it all? I dare you to tell me." (Suimei)

"Th-That is..." (Felmenia)

Even if he asked her, she didn't know the answer. It was true that everything here was somehow reversed. It was like a different world.

"<Phantom Road>" (Suimei)

"Phantom Road?" (Felmenia)

The word Suimei muttered was something she didn't know. It might have been something that he used, but she didn't understand it at all.

"That's right, this is inside a barrier I created. Everything is mirrored here. It's a world I created. It's what you call imaginary space." (Suimei)

"Wh-What? Imaginary space? What are you talking about? What did you do?" (Felmenia)

Even though he tried to explain his magic, she couldn't understand it at all. As a mage, she had never seen anything like this, nor thought that any of the elements could do this.

Magic was something that came from elements. Fire, Water, Wind, Earth, Lightning, Wood, Darkness, and Light. 8 elements. Magic always

consisted of one of these elements. We brought forth the elements to the process, and magic was created.

But, there was no element that was supposed to be essential here.
Nothing.

“Well, well, right from that part? I knew it. This world’s magic is too far behind. That’s why it became an unknown language and concept.”
(Suimei)

“This is magic? There’s no way magic can transform the space like this. What elements did you use? There’s no way.” (Felmenia)

“Well, it’s not only the appearance that changed, but is it that strange? This barrier is a bit too basic though?” (Suimei)

She had never heard of that kind of magic, even the attribute was strange.

“Barrier... magic?” (Felmenia)

“Oi, oi, don’t tell me, there’s not even the concept of barrier magic here?”
(Suimei)

"What are you talking about?" (Felmenia)

"Barrier! B-A-R-R-I-E-R! Are you deaf or what?" (Suimei)

"I-I don't know! There's no such thing in this world!" (Felmenia)

"Seriously? I'm starting to feel peerless in this world you know?"
(Suimei)

Suimei sighed upon hearing of the state of this world's magic. It seems he gave up explaining.

"Oh well, let's skip the hard part. Basically, this is not the White Garden, it's something I created with magic. That's why we can fight all out. No one would notice." (Suimei)

"Ugh..." (Felmenia)

Though she didn't know the details, she realized that this was a cage prepared by him.

After a few moments of silence, Suimei spoke.

“Well, I guess you’re shocked upon learning many new things. But, remaining calm in these situations is a must. Shall we start now?”
(Suimei)

“Do you really think you can beat me in magic? I’m Astel Kingdom’s court mage, Felmenia Stingray. To face this coward, you are the one who’s gonna lose!” (Felmenia)

She still thought that she could destroy this boy. That’s right. Think about it. She’s the White Flame. She’s a mage that reached the pinnacle of flame magic. If it were to come to a fight, it’s a sure-win. So far, she has destroyed many demons.

There’s no way she’d lose in terms of magic power. This was, rather, an advantage for her, since she wouldn’t be able to fight if she weren’t in here.

Yeah, there was no reason to fear him...

“Even if you spout more gibberish, the result is clear.” (Felmenia)

“Arara, that’s quite the confidence. Do you really think you can defeat me?” (Suimei)

“Fine. I will show you the power of Felmenia Stingray, who has reached the true flame. The mage revered as White Flame in Astel Kingdom. Taste my flame!” (Felmenia)

“Mu... true flame?” (Suimei)

Hearing that, Suimei’s expression changed.

Of course, my flame is true flame. Every mage that hears it will tremble upon hearing it and seeing it.

She will show her magic that she boasts of.

“Oh fire. Become the true flame and burn away those who stray from your path. Burn away everything. Become the white catastrophe. <True Flare>!” (Felmenia)

When she chanted it, a white flame swirled. The white flame sucked in the nearby wind, its temperature was many times hotter than a normal flame. A flame that burns everything.

“Na~” (Suimei)

Suimei, who was consumed by the White Flame, let out a weird tone. He just stood there. Of course, this was the revered, longed by all, inextinguishable, the prestigious White Flame. It's natural if he gives up.

Even though Suimei was surrounded by the flame and was bewildered. He suddenly snapped his finger timidly.

Suddenly, the flame lost its color, and turned red instead.



(TL Note :)

"Wh-What!?" (Felmenia)

As her confidence was fleeting, the flame gradually disappeared.

Suimei, who was burned a while ago, looked at the scenery for a while, and turned to her.

"Hmm, is that all?" (Suimei)

His expectations were betrayed by this puny result. It was anti-climactic.

The only thing that came from her mouth was... confusion.

“Wh-Wh-Why!? Why did my White Flame disappear!? That’s the strongest flame you know!? Wh-Why... Only by snapping your finger..” (Felmenia)

“Uwahh.. You are that serious? I thought True Flame would be something dangerous, but, it’s only accelerating the combustion by adding oxygen.”
(Suimei)

“Wh-What’s with that attitude!? M-My fire!” (Felmenia)

Watching Suimei’s disappointment, she couldn’t say anything. Why was the flame gone? Why was he disappointed? Thinking that, she could only get frustrated.

“No curse, no meaning in the flame, it’s just something that was pulled out of nowhere. That’s why it’s pitifully weak. If I were your teacher, I would be shouting at you to start from the basics again.” (Suimei)

“Wh-What? What’s wrong with my magic!?” (Felmenia)

“Everything! E-V-E-R-Y-T-H-I-N-G! You are just a normal flamethrower!”
(Suimei)

"Wh-What!?" (Felmenia)

"God... I don't care anymore..." (Suimei)

Suimei gave up explaining. His amazed eyes turned into eyes of pity. She was irritated that he broke her magic. What did he do? What happened?

When he sighed again, suddenly at his feet...

A magic circle appeared.

"Wh-What!?" (Felmenia)

"What now?" (Suimei)

Suimei was tired of her. But, now, she seemed to be seeing something amazing. She was shocked seeing something impossible.

"A magic circle created without writing it? Impossible..." (Felmenia)

"Heh?" (Suimei)

"Heh my ass. What did you do!? Why did a magic circle suddenly appear!?" (Felmenia)

She was now yelling at him in bewilderment. But, Suimei was supposed to be the one to do that...

A magic circle is something that can appear not only on the ground, on paper, or on anything. It's something that appears on any surface when someone constructs a magic. In magic practice, it's something that helps us simplify things.

Normally, one must draw it themselves. That's why it can't be used in battle. It can only be used in ceremony. But, just now, he... Without doing anything...

"Well, isn't it normal?" (Suimei)

"Normal my ass. It will become a mess if anything interrupts the drawing process!" (Felmenia)

She yelled again. Suimei let out a troubled face.

“Seriously? Even that part? Did this world’s magic die or something?”

(Suimei)

Suimei was looking at her. While thinking, with his finger on his forehead, he spoke with a different tone.

“Hmm, listen, in order to make a magic circle automatically, you have to implement the system in the foundation of magic itself beforehand. If you do that, the magic circle will appear when you use magic, and you can use magic quickly. Understand?” (Suimei)

「えっと、あのな。こいつは予め決めておいた魔術の術式を構築すると、自動で魔法陣が形成されるように、前もって世界に干渉してその魔術の基盤を組み込んでおいたものだ。そうしておく、魔術を使うとき魔法陣が自動で発生して、高速で魔術を行使できるんだよ。分かるか？」

“Eh? Ah?” (Felmenia)

“Don’t just chirp like a bird saying that it’s impossible. Isn’t it happening in front of you right now? If you keep shouting nonsense, and deny even this magic that is happening right now, I will not approve of you as western people. Got it?” (Suimei)

“.....” (Felmenia)

She was frustrated that she couldn't respond. So, she shut up. Even though what he said seemed legit, she had never heard about a technique to make magic circles appear upon activation. There has never been anything like that even among the elders.

"It's just a simplification of magic. It's essential in battle. Is this really a fantasy world? It's like our world is more of a fantasy world than this one you know?" (Suimei)

"Th-There's a simplification of magic! The greatest example is no-chant technique!" (Felmenia)

"Eh? What's that? No-Chant is such an advanced technique?" (Suimei)

"O-Of course!" (Felmenia)

"Well, if it's a big spell, it's a different matter. Then, will this be a great trick?" (Suimei)

Suimei said that easily. He snapped his fingers. Suddenly, the air in front of her burst greatly.

There was not even a moment to take a breath. The exploded air was

blowing in four directions, causing a big shockwave.

“Wh-What!? No chant!? Furthermore, not even a word!?” (Felmenia)

“That’s cool Suimei-kun! You can do it without chanting! Now, you will join the mages’ ranks! Pfft... Stupid.” (Suimei)

He seemed proud for a moment, then immediately depressed. He was not in the mood anymore.

But...

“I’ve had enough of your explanations. I have no intention to ask you anymore. That’s why.” (Felmenia)

Then, he chanted.

“<Archiatius Overload>!” (Suimei)



◆(TL Note :

Was that the chant? Archiatius Overload? Since the chant was short, Felmenia didn’t know what it does, but under his feet, a magic circle was

shining brightly.

Then, a white light with rainbow sparkle appeared.

“!?” (Felmenia)

It was a tremendous magic power. It was so bright that she closed her eyes for a moment. Then, after a silence, she opened her eyes and saw a figure of someone standing there with an intimidating magic aura.

“What!? His magic power increased!? Wha-” (Felmenia)

“What now? I’m already tired listening to you. Don’t say any more than that. Ah. I get it. You are surprised because of the amplification of magic power? I know, I know. I already know your question.” (Suimei)

Suimei was already tired of her questions. He no longer intended to answer her, so he shot down her question right away.

He took a breath and then spoke again.

“Even though I said that we should start now, we wasted too much time. Okay then, Miss Mage, is it my turn?” (Suimei)

When he asked that, Suimei was wearing an interested expression. It looked fun.

She didn't know what just happened. Since she came here, she had thought that many times. The magic amplification too, in the end, like the boy said, he used a magic circle to activate his magic.

Since she prepared magic circles beforehand, it was still weird. It required time to draw them, and it made the time to use magic increase as well. But, the man in front of her produced a miracle. He ignored the minimum time required.

No matter if it was a lie or not, it was the reality. He used it without writing it. He did something she couldn't do or even understand. This boy was definitely invaluable. He has learned magic in a world she didn't know. He should have obtained a divine knowledge.

This boy is definitely stronger than me.

This boy is definitely stronger than the senior mages whom I studied from.

This boy is definitely stronger than Hero Reiji.

This boy is definitely stronger than the Demon Lord that will destroy the world...

"You... What are you?" (Felmenia)

"Oh, I forgot. I've never named myself since I came here. Okay, fine. I will specially name myself before you."

Suimei, as if remembering something, opened his mouth again.

"I am a mage. Suimei Yakagi. My goal is to reach the truth behind all of the world's mysteries. At the moment, Japan's western scholar." (Suimei)

Mage. Suimei Yakagi.

The one who brought down the strongest mage in Astel's history to the ground. A name that she won't ever be able to forget.

Chapter 08

Modern Mage vs Another world's Magician

It went just as he had planned. Because Suimei lured Felmenia to the barrier, he can now demonstrate his full power as a mage.

Seeing the gap in power, Felmenia could only stand in fear and frustration. In front of her, Suimei had showed unimaginable knowledge and magic power. (彼女を前に、水明は己が持てる知識を用立て、魔力を漲らせて臨む。)

If anyone here was to witness this, they would know that this is overkill. Felmenia Stingray, no, mages in this world are too far behind in their world's magic. Then, he should go easy on them. He should reduce the useless magic power and control them. That would be efficient and gentlemanly. Yeah.

But, Suimei has no such intention. Even if he didn't know the level of magic here, didn't know the legal use of a magic circle, didn't know that chanting is essential, or make the magic pool into his body as a mage of this world would, a mage is still a mage.

He prepared the stage for the fight. Since he's the host, he must not forget the courtesy of giving his full power no matter how low the challenger's level is. If you're a mage, do it like a mage; always show your best magic to fascinate the opponent's heart and make them

surrender.

Though, it's true that he prepared it for another reason, too. In the middle of a fight, as the host, he has to appear full of spirit. That's, Suimei Yakagi's pride as a mage.

After the confrontation a while ago, of course, there's no starting line for this fight, The fight had already begun a long time ago. It's now left to whoever decides to move first.

Unable to endure the fight's tension, the first one to move is Felmenia.

"Oh, fire. Become the true flame and burn away those who stray from your path. Burn away everything. Become the white catastrophe. <True Flare>!" (Felmenia)

It's the true flame she proclaimed earlier. Even if she said it's a true flame, it's just a high temperature flame caused by magic. It seems that the previous flame was just a test. There's a huge difference in the scale. That would mean, the magic power infused into this is large.

Suddenly, the flame started swirling like a vortex. It spread a bit, and then it went at him while twisting like a tornado.

Then, Suimei's heart changed completely.

The flame is coming towards him. Even if there's no strong feeling in it anymore, of course, Suimei had no intention of staying still. He took a breath, concentrated, optimized his magic, and he cast it.

"<Secandum ex Quartum excipio>!" (Suimei)

This is a magic for defense. When he first came to this world, he already thought of using it. "A Dazzling Golden shield".

He stretched out his hand, three golden magic circles appeared and turned into a shield.

(TL Note : It did say three... in case you're wondering about the fourth wall later on.)

If it's just a hot flame, it would have no effect. The shield is firm. It won't break from something like a flame. Stopped by the triple magic circle, it can't help but disappear.

Seventh Article, White Flame, made a thunderous noise in its path, and it crashed into the golden magic shield. Upon the impact, the pure white flame scattered. The white flame is trying to pass through it, and it is making thunderous sounds and sparks. It destroyed the surroundings... 1

second. 2 seconds. 3 seconds. 4 seconds. However, the white flame couldn't go through it. It was stopped at the second magic circle. The third circle is rotating in order to configure the magic and unravel it. As a result, the dazzling white flame turned back to a red flame. At last, because of the fourth (last) circle's power, reflection, the flame is scattered in all directions. The magic circle stood there until everything disappeared; this attack was full of rage. (EN: I want to replace the word fourth with last. It would denote the same thing while meshing better with what was said earlier. The number of circles part)

"No! I'm not finished, yet!" (Felmenia)

A voice filled with spirit can be heard. It's the proof of the next shot. Even though it was blocked, she accumulated the white flame again in the air. By saying "Oh, Flame!" for the second time, she shot again on her command. Once again, the white flame is coming; however, this time, attack approached from the side in order to pierce the barrier.

The flame is moving and changing direction. As expected, the Court Mage title is not for show. To change its direction, control the flame, and attack in a nimble manner, she certainly possesses first-class magic control.

However, if it doesn't have quality, it's meaningless no matter how skillful she is. Don't bother trying to pass through these walls, that magic doesn't have enough destructive power to scratch these golden walls. That said, if he let go of the barrier, the flame will catch him; even the court floor is

reduced to ashes. (かといって防御を解いての遁走でも、炎は己をコンマ一秒を削って追い掛けるが、コートの手にも引っ掛からず一筋の焦げあとも残せないのだ。)

While looking at the white flame that can't reach him, he decided that it is his turn to counter-attack. Both sides are opened for escape. That's why, he starts to chant acceleration magic. Reducing Gravity. Reducing mass. <Nutus Mltitudo Decresco.> As he muttered those words, he's freed from the shackles of gravity, and his body becomes light. His body is now seemly weightless.

He sprints at her. No, He flies at her.

The black coat is fluttering and cutting the incoming white flame, it's gliding like a swallow towards Felmenia to attack.

"Too fast." (Felmenia)

It might be a complaint. Suddenly, he's already so close to her that she mistakes his movement for teleportation. By the time she noticed, he's was already three meters from her. Before she finished her sentence, he snaps his finger.

During that brief moment, he possessed eyes cold enough to startle her.

Offensive Magic. Modern mage, Suimei can make compressed air explode just by snapping his finger. Even though it's simple, the power can be great. Because it's simple, it's very fast. Because it's a physical attack, the effect is obvious.

Bachin !

Like a transparent bomb that causes a transparent explosion, the explosion blows up the ground below it. The explosion is near; however, since she saw before, she managed to evade by hair breadth.

"Guh... Argh..." (Felmenia)

As to block her escape route, he snapped his finger again. Realizing that, Felmenia desperately changed her direction. She's trying to escape for her life from the serial explosion.

She cried shouting, "Th-This is ridiculous! How can you cast magic so effortlessly?!" (Felmenia)

"Hah.... If you can't do it, you will lose you third-rate mage. Because the enemy has shot at me, now it's my turn to shot? We're not in RPG Game you know?" (Suimei)

That's right, this is not a game; this is a test with lives at stake. The result can be decided in a split second. It's different from Felmenia's mystery.(フェルメニアの持つ神秘とは訳が違う。)

While Felmenia is trying to escape, he takes out a vial from his pocket. And then, he quickly removes its cap.

The inside is Mercury. This unique metal is a metal that is in liquid form at normal temperatures. In the alchemic world, it's called Androgynous Monster . He has been waiting for this chance to use it.

Then, as it scatters and creates a line in the air, he says, "<Permutatio Coagulatio vis lamina>!" (Suimei)

Gripping the Mercury that is still in liquid form, he's wielding the mercury that has taken its form of a liquid blade. Of course, he chose the form of a blade; a Mercury-Katana. The material is, Mercury. It can be changed into anything by magic. It is a shape-shifting weapon.

"Oh, Earth! Build your obstinate body, and crush my enemy! <Stone Raid>!" (Felmenia)

Before Suimei finished building the shape, Felmenia finished her spell. She shot a dirt attracting bullet at him. Before reaching him, the earth bullet had already become large.

"Eat this!" (Felmenia)

"Too soft !" (Suimei)

He cut the boulder with his sword in the blink of an eye. Even if it's a bullet, it's not something that he can't cut. That's why, if it's just a rock, it's not even a threat. Suimei cut the rock with the tip of his katana that's filled with magic power. He also destroyed the rock bullet from while cutting the large mass of rock. It was elegantly cut with his sword, perfectly.

"You're a mage, yet you can use sword!?" (Felmenia)

"So what if I can use it? Close-quarter combat skill is indispensable for a mage you know? Well, whether it's close or far, it's not a problem."

(Suimei)

Gin.

"Argh, Damn damn damn damn damn !" (Felmenia)

The stone she shot out of desperation is destroyed; furthermore, not even the pebble can scratch him. There wasn't even dust on his clothes.

When he slashed the last rock bullet, the rock lost its shape and crumbled.

“Oh, Fire! Penetrate them, Burn the enemy in front of-” (Felmenia)

“Permutatio Coagulatio vis flagellum” (Suimei)

He chanted at the same time as Felmenia, but because his chant is shorter, he finished it first. A magic circle is created on the Mercury-Katana. Then, he turned his wrist and swung it as fast as he could. Then, the iron-like katana before is now changed into a whip.

Due to the chant, it became a mercury whip. To stop her chanting, he attacked her from the sides.

“Nn!?” (Felmenia)

The mercury strike, surpassing the speed of sounds, made an explosive sound similar to a fired blank. The ground is gradually destroyed. A metal whip’s power can’t be compared to that of a leather whip. The texture, the sharpness, the length, and he can control it all. Even if one had a ridiculously massive body, it would be shredded like a paper. She thought so.

“Ugh...That’s..Impossible..” (Felmenia)

He can take a life with one swing. Facing that truth, Felmenia can’t even move a finger. Usually, she will move while chanting, but her mouth is the same. She can’t even move her mouth. She’s mortified and can only let out a mortified voice.

Her face became pale. Is this the end? No, as long as she’s not on her knees, it’s not the end. Even if she’s mortified, it doesn’t mean she has given up. “I’m standing in front of a predicament.” versus “Where is the recovery room?” It looks like she hasn’t started to think like that. I have to make her unable to defy me, for the second time, from the bottom of her heart.

Then, his magic pool is like burning inside, suddenly, his magic power exploded.

Guon!

He possess a power so strong, that even the castle shook in his presence. His magic power, a power that had nowhere to go, intertwined in the space around him creating blue lighting. It’s like a dragon’s roar.

Then, He turned to Felmenia in front of him. She has lost herself due to

fear, and she is awed by the difference in power; dumbfounded even.

Then, Suimei chanted.

"<Velam nox lacrima potestas>" (Suimei)

Under his feet, a huge magic circle expanded through the garden. A thick blue light that even surpasses the brightness of the stars appears before him. It's still so dazzling and strong even in this fantasy world.

"<Olympus quod terra misceo misucui mixtum>" (Suimei)

Every time a phenomenon ended, another is created. After the chant, a phenomenon is created; Chanted for, one by one. Different from this world's magic, his magic's incantation itself is power. Even while chanting, the world changes, the situation became where miracle is continuously created. Golden particles rise from the ground, floating to heaven and absorbed by the sky. Then, as if mimicking the stars, countless magic circles appeared in mid-air.

"<Dezzmoror pluviaiincessanter>" (Suimei)

When she noticed that the air had already filled with countless magic circles. It's filled with multiple type of wide area spell. The attribute is imitated after Ether. It's derived from the numerous secret arts from Kaballah, and he then made it compatible with Astrology. It's modern

complex magic. (気が付けば、空を彩る星のように天球を埋める魔法陣。種類は多重広域展開型。属性はエーテルと準える空属性。系統はカバラ数秘術及びアストロロジーを両立させた、現代魔術の代名詞とも言える他系統複合魔術。)

Suimei grinned, and he delivered the finishing blow with a smile on his face.

“Court mage-dono, do your best to hold out. Ok?” (Suimei)

Felmenia can't refute those words, she can only daringly put up her defense magic.

Then..

“<Enth astrarle>” (Suimei)

The finishing blow is delivered. Upon that word, light emitted is from the magic circles. The magic power and stars light mixes with one another to create a sky filled with dazzling lights in a multi directional manner. Just like a falling star, a teardrop falls from the sky with a thunderous roar. It silenced all other noise and destroyed all within its range.

This is magic of starry sky, Falling Star. Befitting of the term Ens Astral(エ

ンスアストラーレ), this is one of Suimei Yakagi's biggest spells. Not long after the falling star took place, what left is the original White Garden. It's like all the destruction until now was a dream. There was Suimei Yakagi with his black suit and Felmenia with her tattered white robe.

He proceeded to Felmenia who was unable to move, and put his sword to her neck.

"It's my win, is there any problem with that?" (Suimei)

When asked about the result, she said with trembling voice.

"Yo-You Monster.. That kind of power! Who said that you can't fight? Why you reject to slay the demon lord? If you go, even the Demon Lord..."
(Felmenia)

"Can be defeated? That's stupid. The numbers are not a joke. The history is the proof. No matter how strong you are, you can't win against the overwhelming number. There's no need to try. No matter how good the fighter is, it's nothing against the numerous. I'm just one human."
(Suimei)

Feeling as though he hasn't said enough, Suimei opened his mouth again.

“If I listen to your request, the one that I have to fight is not only the demon lord Nakushathra or something (ナクシャトラ). There’s his subordinate army of demons too. That Barcodohage (バーコードハゲ) already destroyed country Noshast (ノーシアス) using one million troops; however, if we think about it, what if they gathered their forces? Two times larger? Three times? It’s already stupid to tell me to face those one million troops. Even if you select your few best, there’s no chance to win against that unusual number you know? Whatever I do, there’s no way I can win, damn it.”
(Suimei)

“What are you talking about? War is a battle of personal power. If you have that much power, you can’t be defeated!” (Felmenia)

“Are you idiot? I’m saying that quality and quantity is different. Quality isn’t any guarantee to win against quantity.” (Suimei)

“A mage li-....A mage as powerful as you bastard, you still say that?”
(Felmenia)

“Hah ? Me ? I’m not a first class mage. Well, I have a bit of talent, but, in my world I’m at best only average. That’s right.. If it’s the top’s top, he might be able to laugh this off. But, that’s doesn’t matter here.” (Suimei)

“.....” (Felmenia)

Now, it's Felmenia's turn to lose words. Whether it's because of Suimei's abnormally terrifying world, or if it's because of Suimei exaggerated things, it's certain that she's unable to say a thing because of the overwhelming difference.

"Well, I already knew it from the start. This world's magic is far too left behind. Honestly, our fight wasn't even that fun. Or, maybe that's just because of your harsh remarks." (Suimei)

That's right, right now Suimei is saying his honest feelings. His delight is of seeing new mystery; a fight with another mage, for him, is a way to see unknown magic. To figure out that magic is the purpose of the battle. However, in this fight, there wasn't even a single bit of magic worth looking at.

Unexpected, surprised, and easy destruction. "A fight beyond understanding", that's why he won; of course, he felt no delight in it.

As it was already bound to happen, he forced the results upon Felmenia.

"Well then, now. Let's put an end to our play, magician." (Suimei)

She felt cold upon hearing it. He changed his tone; it was as if his heart

suddenly went cold. Felmenia couldn't even stand up. She couldn't do anything about it. It was as if she will meet her end, alone. She became pale.

"Ar-Are you going to kill me?" (Felmenia)

"Hmm, that's right.. How do you think I will end this?" (Suimei)

"Pl-Please ! Do anything but that!" (Felmenia)

Felmenia discarded her pride and prostrated to Suimei. Help me. Overlook me. She swore not to go against him, but his appearance didn't change.

But, Suimei snorted and with evil intention, saying..

"Oh my, oh my! you came at me with the intention to kill, but you are pleading for your life?" (Suimei)

"N-No ! I have no intention to kill you from the start! I just wanted to correct you..." (Felmenia)

Felmenia shook her head violently. He stared at her with no interest and doubting eyes. In a fight with lives at stake, it's not a reason to plead. He

already prepared for this. He intends to destroy the opponent and at worst get destroyed instead; however, he never considered that this unsightly view is the price she would pay.

(命を懸けて場に臨んだ訳ではないにしろ、これでは覚悟がなさすぎた。相手をぶちのめす気概はあるが相手にぶちのめされる最悪は考えなかったがゆえ、この不様はその代償だろう。)

I have heard about story of noble princesses. For better or worse, her personality might get affected.

Then, Suimei asked the true meaning of the statement from before.

“Is it true that you had no intention to kill me?” (Suimei)

“It’s true! I swear to Goddess Alshuna, it’s not a lie!” (Felmenia)

“Though I don’t know the weight of your goddess’s name, as a person from other world, a Japanese, I’m not going to get involved. ” (Suimei)

With a clink, the flangeless katana made a sound that a katana with a flange would. (Flange is the katana’s guard that separates the blade and the hold.) Felmenia, who is not Japanese, doesn’t know what he’s talking about, but she can feel instinctively that her life is getting shorter; her

attempt at getting Suimei to spare her life became a pathetic appeal.

“Please! I beg you! I don’t want to die yet! I don’t want to die.. Please.. I beg you...” (Felmenia)

It looks like he bullied her too much. If she already faltered this much, it’s probably fine to enter the real thing. Suimei thought that, and he then stopped his bullying act.

He said, as if bored, “Then, as exchange of letting you live, I have terms you must follow.” (Suimei)

“T-Terms?” (Felmenia)

“Yeah, first, don’t ever tell anyone about what happened today. Second, don’t ever tell anyone about my identity as mage. Especially to Reiji and Mizuki. Got it?” (Suimei)

He gave a sharp look. But, Felmenia shook her head with all of her might.

“W-Wait. I haven’t told anything to Reiji-dono or Mizuki-dono, but the king already knows. Th-Then..” (Felmenia)

“Heh..That’s surprising. An overconfident person like you told someone else? That’s surprising. I thought you would have kept it to yourself since you thought you would definitely win. Well, I don’t mind that much. After all, you won’t be able to speak of the details now.” (Suimei)

Since she already avoided the danger from the first term, Felmenia relieved. Seeing this, Suimei stated the last and most important term.

“And third, you will have to sign this document.” (Suimei)

Suimei made a gesture as if drawing something from void; a paper with a pen appeared. He always brings his pen and paper. There’s a list written in a foreign language.

Of course, Felmenia doesn’t understand what is written there.

“Wh-What is this?” (Felmenia)

“What, it’s just a contract. So that you won’t go against the terms I stated before. You can do this much right?” (Suimei)

“I-I understand, I’ll sign it.” (Felmenia)

Felmenia is a bit suspicious but agreed. Even if she doesn't understand clearly, she has no choice anyway.

After she finished signing, she stamped it with her blood. Since Suimei watched until the end, he said it plainly.

"Ah, I forgot to tell you, if you break it, you'll die." (Suimei)

"Wh-What !?" (Felmenia)

"Yup. If you intend to explain the majority of things that happened here tonight to the king, I want you to know that that is not allowed. I don't want things to get any more complicated than this already has." (Suimei)

"Wait. There's no way that's possible-" (Felmenia)

"There's nothing impossible for a mage." (Suimei)

As expected, this wasn't out of scorn for her, though. To felmenia, that ask this dubiously, this is the most effective answer. Suimei let go of his mercury-katana and use his finger that is filled with magic power to poke the contract. Suddenly, Felmenia can feel something gripping her heart.

"That's Stup-, Gu, Guahhh!" (Felmenia)

"By the way, it's just like this. You can feel the force gripping your heart right?" (Suimei)

He removed his finger from the contract. Felmenia was released from the grip, and she was faintly breathing. Then, she complained faintly.

"Gu.Ha.. I-I never heard of something like that, before." (Felmenia)

"Even if you know, you have no choice anyway. What? It's not that hard. I just don't want you to tell anyone about me. It's more honest than the folklore of defeating demon lord right?" (Suimei)

"a..u..u..." (Felmenia)

She didn't respond, and she hung her head in defeat.

(Ara.. Did I overdid it?) (Suimei)

Looks like, she's spectacularly broken. Felmenia have tears in her eyes; she was dumbfounded and sobbing.

Shown this much, even the culprit, Suimei Yakagi, couldn't help but to show mercy.

Let's end this huh? As expected, he's not that cruel. He's impatiently says to Felmenia.

"We-Well. That's why I want you to be sure to protect your promise, ok? Even me, I don't want to kill pointlessly; it would make me feel bad."
(Suimei)

Somehow, it's a bit softer than before. Is it because of sympathy? Felmenia's still sobbing; it's unknown whether she listened or not. It's a bit different from his prediction, he's scratching his head. Then, he decided that he probably won't do anything more than this. He left the White Garden.

Even though he finished this, this wasn't exactly what he imagined would happen.

A fight between mages is by no means a life and death fight. Actually, it's rare for a mage to take another mage's life. It's true that he won't forgive someone that entered his workshop without his permissions; however, other than that, everyone respected each other. A brotherhood that must take each other's hand.

Recently, Magic is paused by science. A brake is applied to non-stop development. That's why, those who pursue magic, even then, is valuable. That's why, in order to preserve magic, there's a rule preventing one from killing another mage even if the magic lineage is different. For that reason, that contract from back then is often used. For sparing their life, they must not be able to do any harm more than this. This way, the mage can still live, and magic users won't go extinct.

Though, he omit some exception, therefore a mage fight is not something to take each other's life, but to compete with each other. In short, precision, power, and technique's complexity, the class of magic, theory, special characteristic, it is a fight to make them accept each other.

Then, what about this fight? There's no exceptional magic, so there's no need to dwell in victory.

That's why; he can only feel like this.

"Really, they are so far behind.." (Suimei)

At the words he told Felmenia before, he's now worried. From now on, he would have to live here. He wondered if there's any mystery that can make him excited.

Chapter 09

My Duty is...

A few days after the events in White Garden, Felmenia Stingray was summoned to the audience chamber by King Almadius. The reason was, of course, to hear about Hero Reiji's progress in learning magic. He wanted to hear it from the teacher herself.

The king heard about it from other people as well, but the details were like "Mass of Talent", "Magic Genius", "World's Best", and other such vague descriptions. The details were not clear. It might be that he's strong beyond comprehension. Anyway, as the person who sent him, he had the responsibility to know the details.

He wanted the hero's teacher, Felmenia, to report. Felmenia, wearing a white robe and kneeling before him, was going to evaluate Hero Reiji and Mizuki Anou.

In short, Hero Reiji's talent was extraordinary. His magic power alone was 10 times stronger than the Court Mage's. There were still a few problems with his control and technique, but she thought that his comprehension speed when learning magic was weird. About Mizuki Anou, even though she didn't have that much power compared to Hero Reiji, she had a similar ability. Regarding her ability to comprehend and express magic, she was probably on par with the Hero without the Hero's Blessing.

"That's all. I'm impressed by Hero Reiji's and Mizuki Anou's progress. They will someday be on par with other countries' top mages as well."
(Felmenia)

Lastly, to finish Felmenia's compliment, the king asked a joke.

"Will they surpass you?" (King)

"If it's Reiji-dono, maybe." (Felmenia)

"Is that so. I'm relieved. If Reiji-dono's talent is that great, then I have no worries." (King)

"Yes. I'm surprised as well. It's only been two weeks since he first experienced magic, and he's already on par with an intermediate level mage. 'Hero that is chosen by the world' is not just a title. As a mage myself, I must say I'm jealous." (Felmenia)

Said Felmenia silently. She dropped her face a bit. Even though she didn't express it clearly, since she spoke honestly about being envious, it was shown on the surface a bit. Not surprising. According to what she said, Hero Reiji's growth couldn't be put into words anymore. To have made Felmenia, who was known as a genius, say such words, it was probably cruel.

"That might be so, but if he doesn't have at least that much power..."
(King)

"I agree with Your Highness, the demon lord wouldn't be defeatable."
(Felmenia)

"Fumu." (King)

The king nodded in agreement. Having heard the hero's progress, he wanted to give thanks to Felmenia who had helped him until now.

"Mage, Felmenia Stingray, I have heard the circumstances. Three days until Hero Reiji's departure. Until then, give it your best." (King)

"As you wish. Then, I will be leaving..." (Felmenia)

After Felmenia paid her respects, she tried to leave...

But, she couldn't hear agreement from the king. Instead, the king opened his mouth as if there was still something else...

"Felmenia, there's someone else I want to ask you about, is it fine?"

(King)

"Y-Yes." (Felmenia)

"About that boy, Reiji-dono's friend, Suimei-dono." (King)

There, the king mentioned Suimei's name.

That's right, other than Felmenia's report; the king was also interested in Suimei. He also used magic inside of castle while strolling. But, the king feared Felmenia and Suimei's confrontation the most. It had been a few days since that conversation. He wanted to ask whether anything had happened...

"Su-Suimei-dono?" (Felmenia)

As if not expecting such question, Felmenia panicked a bit. Though she didn't intend to let out such a small voice, the king asked her.

"That's right. Back then, you told me that the boy was moving right? You always kept observing him right?" (King)

"Th-That's..." (Felmenia)

"Felmenia?" (King)

But, somehow, Felmenia tried to avoid the king's gaze and couldn't speak clearly. It was different from the talk about the hero, the king couldn't understand.

Anyway, the situation was weird. She would always respond coldly. No matter the situation or the enemy, she would always be calm. She would look to meet the enemy. But now, there was nothing like that.

"Ah...Uh..." (Felmenia)

"What's wrong ? Don't tell me, something happened?" (King)

"N-No, It's just that..." (Felmenia)

Even though the king asked twice, she acted like she was holding something and said weird things. When he realized, she was sweating. Now, he asked seriously.

"Answer me, Felmenia. If you stay silent, the conversation won't go anywhere, you know? Tell me what happened and what you saw." (King)
But, instead of answering, she lowered her head.

"Y-Your Highness! Please, somehow, forgive me, anything but that!"
(Felmenia)

"Are you saying that you can't speak of it?" (King)

"Yes... Unfortunately, as Your Highness said..." (Felmenia)

"Why?" (King)

"That too, I can't speak of it, I beg for forgiveness." (Felmenia)

"Mu..." (King)

Upon seeing that persistent attitude, he could only groan.

Felmenia declined while prostrating. She had never been like this. But, why was she hiding it to that extent? No, it's why now? Before now, if something happened, she wouldn't like talking about it. If she spoke something bad, there would be a punishment. She probably thought so. That meant, it was her self-defense from punishment. Then, everything was clear.

"I already told you not to do anything, Felmenia. But, it seems you did something to him, am I wrong?" (King)

When asked with a stronger tone, Felmenia became like a small animal, trembling and scared. The wise Felmenia was ashamed that she didn't expect this to happen. But, no matter how scared she was, a punishment is a punishment. First, grasp the situation, then, if she explained, it would be alright...

Then...

"Speak. I can't give the proper punishment if you don't speak." (King)

"P-Please Your Highness, I-I beg for forgiveness." (Felmenia)

"There's no need to be that obstinate. I already expect things that can even endanger my life. Speak all of it." (King)

"Y-Your Highness..." (Felmenia)

"It's heavy, you know? Felmenia?" (King)

When he realized, she was frozen like for eternity, and tears welled up in her eyes. He wondered, when was the last time he saw her crying? When she entered an evening party for the first time, she got lost. She was separated from her father, Count Stingray, and her mother. She was confused and didn't know where to go. That was probably the last time.

This was weird. It was like he was extorting something from her.

"...Why can't you talk?" (King)

"....." (Felmenia)

Felmenia didn't answer, she only hang her head down.

King Almadius was thinking about why she refused to talk.

Since he didn't receive an answer, he decided to change the question...

"Felmenia. I will ask you a question now." (King)

"But, Your Highness..." (Felmenia)

"Listen, Felmenia. If the answer is "correct", stay silent. If the answer is "wrong", shake your head. Understand?" (King)

She could only stay silent...

Then, the king asked her one by one.

"In the last few days, did something happen with Suimei-dono?" (King)

"....." (Felmenia)

Silence... Bullseye. But, it was still within his predictions.

"Was it a conversation?" (King)

This time, Felmenia shook her head.

"Was it using force?" (King)

"....." (Felmenia)

Right on the mark. If it was using force, the punishment would have been coercion with magic.

Felmenia should have known. But, I might be wrong.

"Did you hurt Suimei-dono?" (King)

But, she shook her head.

"Wait. Did you try to hurt him?" (King)

"....." (Felmenia)

Felmenia stayed silent. Now this is surprising. According to her, she used force. She must have taunted him, but, even though she's the country's best mage, she couldn't even hurt him. What does that mean...

King decided to ask her again.

"Did you lose?" (King)

"....." (Felmenia)

There was only silence. It's certain now. Felmenia faced Suimei alone, and the result was that she was miserably defeated.

"Then, at that time, somehow you had your weakness held by Suimei-dono, and as a result, you can't speak now?" (King)

"....." (Felmenia)

Right on the mark... So, she couldn't speak because of her weakness. Even though the person who held it is not here, she still abided by the contract. But, Felmenia and Suimei are both beings that reside in Magic's Abyss realm. For me who only has limited knowledge, it's hard to guess the contract.

"Y-Your Highness. I'm sorry. Not only to break your order, I have shown disloyalty. This Felmenia will accept any kind of punishment." (Felmenia)

"It's fine. You already received your punishment from Suimei-dono. I won't punish you anymore." (King)

"Y-Your Highness..." (Felmenia)

Regretting her mistakes, Felmenia was extremely discouraged. The fight with Suimei had left a very big impact on her.

If so, she no longer needed to be punished. Being like this, her pride would have vanished already. I have one less thing to worry about. But, I can't afford to be at ease. In return, I received another thing to worry about.

"Felmenia. I can't afford to overlook this. I'm thinking of summoning Suimei-dono here." (King)

"Your Highness, to summon Suimei-dono, what for..." (Felmenia)

Felmenia was extremely embarrassed, the answer was obvious.

"Isn't it obvious? I will ask things that I can't hear from you. Whether it's about the summoning room or your weakness, I can't overlook this discord." (King)

"I-It must not be done! You can't—A-a-Argh!!!" (Felmenia)

Suddenly, she held her chest and started screaming.

"Felmenia!? What happened!? Felmenia!?" (King)

The king stood at the throne watching this unusual event. Not only was her suffering unusual, she writhed on the floor and cried. Thankfully, it didn't last long, and then she bowed her head again.

"Ah... Ah... I'm sorry... for showing... such disgraceful..." (Felmenia)

"What just happened? Is it illness?" (King)

"No..." (Felmenia)

She denied it. But, it certainly was something. She sweated and curled up in a ball, her face was pale like a dead man's. Of course, I would have thought that it was an illness. But, I've never heard that she had an illness before. I reevaluate the situation. Her chest hurt. It was probably her heart. It was in the middle of conversation. When she objected, and talked about Suimei.

That would mean...

"Can it be, your weakness?" (King)

"....." (Felmenia)

"Magic?" (King)

"....." (Felmenia)

Felmenia didn't answer. No, she couldn't answer because of it. From her

distorted face, it could be seen that she was full of regret, condemning her own foolishness.

It seems I can't ask anymore.

So, I say...

"I understand. Felmenia. Leave everything it to me." (King)

"Your Highness?" (Felmenia)

"Just like I said before, I will summon Suimei-dono." (King)

"B-But!" (Felmenia)

"It's fine. I will take all the blame. You-" (King)

After that, King Almadius dispatched a messenger to the mage who placed the curse.

Chapter 10

As a Magician...

In the dead of night, at the conclusion of his conversation with Felmenia, the King heard the door to his audience room swing open.

The one entering was Yakagi Suimei, the friend of the Hero and the one Felmenia had explained to be a mage from another world.

This ordinary-looking boy from another world bowed at the entrance, and then slowly approached.

Although the impression he gave off was identical to the one he'd felt from Suimei when they'd first met in this same room, he was now attired in clothing that the King had never seen before. This clothing was uniformly pitch black, and elegantly designed: clearly of the highest quality.

Visibly unaccustomed to such situations, Suimei's posture was a bit stiff as he kneeled before the King.

"As summoned, I have come before you, Your Majesty."

"Thank you for answering my summons despite the late hour. Your formality in presenting yourself is appreciated, but tonight, it's just the two of us. There's no need to be so formal. Please relax."

"..."

"Is that unacceptable?"

"...I understand."

Surprised at the request, Suimei hesitated for a moment heeding the plea and raising his head.

His expression, however, was still somewhat stiff.

At this, the King opted not to jump right into the main topic, but instead asked about his clothing.

“Suimei-dono, what is this clothing you have on? You don’t wear this normally.”

“That is correct. This is something I’ve brought with me from our world. Originally, it was something I kept in my bag, one of the very few items I have with me.”

“The style seems rather different from Hero-dono’s.”

“In our world, it’s considered formal wear, and is worn on occasions such as this.”

His words caused the King to again consider the clothing Suimei now wore. The jet black material was entirely uncreased and the inner lace lining ran to the neck. The stark contrast drawn by the two reinforced the feeling of an elegant design.

“Hmm. It fits you rather well.”

“Thank you for your praise, Your Majesty.”

As Suimei replied, he adjusted his collar and sleeves without shifting his posture. This action brought with it a familiarity that erased his former stiffness. Suddenly, as if remembering something of importance, he bowed his head.

“Although this comes rather late, but please allow me to apologize for my rudeness these last few days.”

A truly respectful apology.

—Suimei was apologizing for his behavior after their summoning. On that day, having learned that they had no way of returning home, he'd become quite agitated. That said, such a response was only natural given the circumstances.

On that occasion, Suimei had leapt to his feet and yelled, "Are you kidding me? If you can't send us back, then don't bother summoning us in the first place!" and things of that nature. Indeed, they had been words that had truly hurt the King.

Suimei's provocative attitude had angered the surrounding people. The King, attempting to mediate, had ordered them to settle down, never expecting that Suimei would later come and apologize.

"Oh, no, that's unnecessary. No harm done. Your feelings at the time were only natural. We had one-sidedly pulled you into our world only to inform you that we have no way of sending you home. There is no need for you to apologize; please raise your head."

"Understood. Then..."

The King's honest words prompted Suimei to lift his head once more. From his expression, it was clear that he felt it wasn't a matter of who was to blame; either way, he felt the commotion caused by his actions had been inappropriate. This was apparent from the awkward look on his face.

With this, the preamble to their conversation had ended.

Suimei spoke next, "Might I ask what you called me here to speak about...?"

"Yes. There are things that I wish to ask you."

"...I understand."

Suimei's acknowledgment revealed his confusion, and his slightly pale face was colored with puzzlement. Considering for a moment whether the look Suimei showed now were his true thoughts revealing themselves, the King followed up with a question.

"There are a few things I wish to ask you regarding Felmenia."

"Felmenia-san...? If I remember correctly, she's the one who's been teaching Reiji and Mizuki magic? What about her?"

"That is the one. She mentioned to me that she'd seen you wander around the palace a few days ago."

Faced with Suimei's pretense at having only a superficial knowledge of who Felmenia was, the King brought up what he had heard from her.

Those words brought a weak, bitter smile to Suimei's face, as if something unpleasant had been discovered about him.

"Ah... hahaha. Yeah, I'd heard that we were free to roam the palace, so I'd gone for a walk to settle myself. Was I somehow incorrect about that?"

"No, there was nothing inappropriate about that. Indeed, I'd given explicit orders to that effect. No, it's not that incident that concerns me."

"Then what, might I ask?"

"This."

"?"

Confusion was written all over Suimei's face. It must be noted, however, that that expression was not born of his true feelings. Having mentioned Felmenia, but having said nothing about her, it was clear that he had

understood from the very beginning the purpose of this line of questioning, but fully intended nonetheless to play dumb. Indeed, from the very moment he'd been summoned for questioning, he'd begun this show of ignorance. To have been summoned at such a time would undoubtedly give rise to some misgivings. If the King were Suimei, he'd have made some preparations beforehand. Given his powers, he would likely have readied himself to make a forceful escape if necessary. Since the other party was a mage who had defeated Felmenia, it wasn't like there was much the King could do; escape should be simple for Suimei. With that in mind, the fact that he had not done so seemed to show that he thought he could wrap things up nicely by simply playing the fool. Accordingly, though he knew that continuing would be dangerous, the King had no choice but to press forward.

"What I want to know is: what exactly did you do to Felmenia?"

" 'What did I do?' I can't say I understand what you mean."

"Suimei-dono, you very well know what I mean. Please be honest—"

"Forgive my disrespect, but are you sure that continuing would be wise?"

As if to drown out the King's voice, Suimei interrupted his words with a razor-edged "suggestion" in stark contrast to the polite tone he'd been using.

Understanding the warning implicit in Suimei's words, he nevertheless continued, "Suimei-dono. I want to know."

Seeing the King persist despite having recognized his warning, Suimei abandoned his reverent posture and rose to his feet.

With a wave of his hands, a cloak appeared from out of thin air and settled on his shoulders.

Although he didn't quite understand what had just happened, but it was evident that this was Suimei's magic. This was something that a mage of their world lacked the capability to comprehend, a spell of Suimei's repertoire.

Appearing on his face next was an expression that made his former look of fear seem but an illusion. His gentle expression was replaced with a sharp look which carried with it a proud air that the King had only seen in other mages.

Typically, this audience room would be filled with people who would have berated Suimei for his arrogance, but at this moment, there were none.

Seeing the King's gaze captured by this first glimpse of him as a magician, Suimei sighed.

"—Honestly. That girl's shown no trace of having kicked the bucket, so I'm sincerely surprised things have been exposed to this degree."

"So that's really..."

"Yes, it's as you imagine. My identity as a magician was discovered by that girl when we first arrived, so I searched for the first opportunity to shut her mouth, and so here we are. —On that note, that girl shouldn't be able to speak a word, so how did you figure things out, Your Majesty?"

"I took the proactive role in questioning her. Whenever she failed to respond, it signified that I had guessed correctly."

At this succinct explanation, Suimei expressed an "Ah" of enlightenment.

“So that’s how it is; I completely missed that possibility. Indeed, the contract binding her can be circumvented by not speaking a word.”

His words were delivered casually as if reminiscing, when suddenly his gaze sharpened and focused on the King.

“Then why did you call me here? I am, after all, the man who holds that woman’s life in his hands. Since you know as much, for you to have called me here without any bodyguards to protect you... That this is dangerous should be incredibly apparent.”

This was indeed readily apparent, and had been the danger inherent in this summons. Despite knowing the danger posed, he’d nonetheless called Suimei forth without any countermeasures in place. Thus, Suimei’s question was understandable; nevertheless, it had been necessary for the King to call him here.

“—There is undoubtedly cause for concern, but it is also the truth that Suimei-dono and Hero-dono were both brought here at my command. That is reality. Furthermore, that I have pushed our world’s unreasonable problems on the hands of all of you, who are not of our world, is also reality.”

To bare his fangs at Suimei was unconscionable. To do so would make him nothing more than a wolf in sheep’s clothing. An utterly unreasonable plan of action.

“...”

“Suimei-dono. For having brought you here to this foreign place and having failed to stop my subjects from scorning you, I ask your forgiveness. Moreover, to ask you to heed a request on top of all of that is

indeed rude of me. Nonetheless, I must tell you that I still want to know. Would that be alright?"

"Why do you want to know so badly? It's nothing to you if you don't know, right?"

"Perhaps what you say is correct, however, but if I were to avert my eyes and pretend to have seen nothing, and were she to lose her life in the process, it would be too late for regret."

"—Even if it's someone as haughty as that woman?"

"Just so. She is my subject, and thus it is only right that I do my best to protect her."

Those words again elicited a sigh from Suimei.

"As long as she does not speak, there is no threat to her life, none whatsoever. Alright, with that, we're done here, right?"

"No, not yet."

"I believe there's nothing else worthy of discussion?" Suimei replied, a strange look on his face.

Things had taken an unexpected turn. Even though the topic at hand had concluded, there was still more to ask?

"Suimei-dono, I am still fully ignorant of your situation. As the one responsible for having brought you to this world, I wish to know. What kind of person are you? What do you plan to do from now on? I desire that you be frank with me. If at all possible, I would hope that you would be open with me."

These words truly came from his heart.

When it came to Suimei, as long as he and Felmenia kept quiet, then that would be that. Those who knew of his circumstances would remain just the two. With that, things would return to the status quo: he would have summoned the Hero and sent him off to battle with the Maou.

However, to act in such a way would be to discard all responsibility as the one who had brought them to this world. Since he had taken action to bring them here of his own accord, were he to simply ignore any problems that arose, focusing only on his own needs, even if they possessed the power to free him from this situation, such a path could only be described as irresponsible. Instead, he hoped to understand Suimei's plans, and thus to provide whatever support was within his ability to offer; that was only reasonable.

However—

"...Of course, I do not intend to force a response. Prying into something that Suimei-dono does not want to reveal is simply my wishful thinking. If this is truly something that you do not want to speak of, then do not mind me. That being said, I still ask that you understand."

The King bowed his head from where he sat on his throne, something that a ruler of a nation should never do. However, in order to protect the beliefs that he held dear to him, he could do naught else.

As he raised his head a moment later, his eyes caught sight of Suimei, utterly taken aback.

"Why would you do something like that? Why would you disgrace yourself to such an extent?"

From his expression, the degree of his surprise was evident.

With that, Suimei heaved a deep sigh, as if he'd finally resigned himself to something.

"No, rather, please forgive me for my impertinence. If there is something Your Majesty wishes this person of humble standing to answer, then please, ask freely."

—Suimei continued to stand. His posture would likely be seen as disrespectful by others, but from the way his arrogant manner had vanished, and the change in his tone, it seemed that this was his true self. This was neither the confused, lost Suimei standing by the side of Reiji and Mizuki when they had been first summoned, nor was it the haughty, blunt persona he had shown just a moment ago. No, this was Suimei as he truly was: Yakagi Suimei, the magician.

For that reason, this was the greatest respect that he could show.

Suimei having expressed his willingness to comply, the King began his line of questioning.

"What kind of person are you?"

"In my world, we are known as magicians. We are scholars who delve into the mysteries of the world. More colloquially, we are existences roughly equivalent to the mages of your world."

"Magicians..."

He mumbled the word he had just heard. Due to the influence of the hero summoning, the word "mage" had been mentioned quite frequently of late. However, this term struck him quite differently. Perhaps because it had been Suimei who had said it, the nature of the word had been conveyed: that it described something different from a "mage." ("魔術師"

is the term used to describe magicians of Suimei's world, while "魔法使い" is used by the people of the other world. In the vernacular, they mean the same thing, but here, the author is likely emphasizing the difference in the individual characters to suggest the difference between their roles in the respective worlds, "師" meaning "specialist" and "使い" meaning "user." Furthermore, the "術" in "魔術" is used to describe techniques or skills.)

The King immediately followed up with another question.

"Why, then, do you want to keep this all a secret? Putting us aside, you haven't even allowed Hero-dono or Mizuki-dono to know."

"You've already heard this from Reiji and Mizuki, but our world is different from yours: a world that has relied on science for its growth. In our world, magic is something that's been forced into the underworld, having been targeted by every major power there. That's why, on the surface of things, magicians aren't something that exist in my world. Were we to appear once more in the open, we would undoubtedly be wiped out by those powers for non-compliance. For that reason, as far as the public is concerned, there is no such thing as a magician."

As he finished speaking, he added a final remark, "That's why I've hidden what I really am; caution is necessary."

"From what you've said, it seems that not only could you not allow Reiji-dono and Mizuki-dono to know, you had to spare no effort to keep Felmenia silent because she'd discovered your true nature?"

"Yes. At that time, I wasn't entirely certain how much she knew. How I would ensure her silence was a matter to be decided once that had been

determined. Accordingly, I intentionally exposed myself in order to draw her in. Who could have guessed that she'd have set a trap for me with that dangerous golem... Since she had revealed herself as having no intentions of settling the matter with words, I took appropriate action. That was my decision at the time, anyway."

Something of what he had said piqued the King's interest.

"Golem?"

"That's correct. A rather formidable creation with the appearance of a knight. Reacting to its ambush, I destroyed it with my magic."

"Mage Slamas' golem, huh."

When it came to the golem that had attacked Suimei, the King more or less had an understanding of its origins. Within the palace, the only golems were those created by Slamas. Indeed, when it came to autonomous golems, it could only be him.

Slamas' golems were masterfully crafted, powerful existences. For her to have brought something like that out, Felmenia's hardline attitude prior to her defeat was quite clear.

However.

"Be that as it may, even if Felmenia had gone that far, don't you think you went a bit overboard with your response?"

Progressing immediately to battle from such a situation seemed rather hasty, there should still have been some room for discussion.

Even if Felmenia had been the one to initiate things, he couldn't help but ask that question.

In answer to his question, Suimei took on a strangely serious look.

"I won't deny that I somewhat lost my cool. Nevertheless, I am one who treads the path of magic and we magicians adhere to a magician's etiquette. When faced with a wild dog – sorry, a prideful young girl – raising her nose at me, to fail to punish such ferocious conduct would be unthinkable. That said, with regards to what happened afterward, well... I have to admit I might have been venting my anger at having been forcefully brought to this world."

Suimei revealed a wry smile befitting one his age, and sighed.

"...Seriously, what a naughty brat."

"Magicians are just such people. People who consider only what they stand to gain, without the least interest in anything else, who never spare a moment's consideration for how their actions might affect those around them. That notwithstanding, considering how unrestrained Your Majesty has allowed Felmenia to be, I don't think you have any right to complain."

"That's true."

Certainly, even though he was well aware of Felmenia's intentions, he had washed his hands of the matter. He definitely did not have the moral authority to condemn Suimei's actions. Unrestrained magic use could be used for an uncountable number of evils. Although Suimei clearly possessed the power to realize his desires, he had chosen to avoid causing problems, instead holing up in his room. Even when he had left his room to investigate the palace, venturing through the storehouses, offices, and treasury – places that housed priceless objects – he had not done a thing.

In contrast, Felmenia's violent actions could only be seen as deserving of the response that had come. He had no way of knowing what ideologies presided in the other world, but given the danger posed by the golem trap, even if Suimei had taken her life, they didn't have the right to complain.

While he was thus reflecting, Suimei suddenly turned to face a nearby pillar.

"There's no way—" the King thought to himself as Suimei suddenly broke the silence.

"...So that's how it is. I was pretty much just venting my anger on whatever was right before me; that's why you can rest assured, I won't do anything like that to you again."

Those words didn't seem to have been intended for him— no, they had clearly been intended for someone else. Suimei had meant those words for Felmenia. A figure stepped out from behind the pillar.

"..."

Felmenia stepped out from behind the shadow of the pillar, a look of astonishment on her face.

Suimei gave her an indifferent glance before turning to face the King once more.

"...How long have you known?"

"To that, let me ask in turn: why would you ever assume I wouldn't notice?"

"..."

That was a good point. Suimei was a magician. Rather than assuming he would always remain ignorant, it was better to work off the assumption that he would always figure things out.

“Suimei-dono. About this—”

“You don’t need to say anything. When you told me it was just the two of us at the start of our discussion, that was clearly a lie, but when you consider that it was for the sake of that woman who is a precious subject of yours, then it’s not like I can’t understand.”

“I’m sorry.”

The King offered a frank apology. That Felmenia had been hidden in the shadows at his side was not because she’d been guarding him, but because he was worried about her. Were Felmenia present at the scene, then perhaps Suimei would have been less than honest about her circumstances. Were she not in attendance, however, then she would have remained in ignorance as to the details of her circumstances. Thus he’d ordered her to hide herself.

The result? Suimei, having seen through their pretense from the very beginning, had nonetheless said what he had said.

Her face ashen, Felmenia called Suimei’s name.

“S-Suimei-dono...”

“Whatever it is you want to say, there’s no need to look like that, is there? It’s like you’re cowering; if you’re a magician, then you should face even death with your back straight and head held high. Aren’t you older than me?”

“Ah...”

Felmenia closed her mouth at his acerbic tone, unable to respond to his words.

Since Suimei seemed to be awaiting her question, she spoke.

“Then the reason you were investigating the hero summoning circle was...”

Because of his determination to return home.

“I’ve already said that I wish to return to our own world. There are things there that I absolutely cannot afford not to do. Moreover—”

“Moreover...?”

“...Before the day comes that Reiji and Mizuki wish to return, I will need to have first prepared the way. Knowing that they will face danger, but unable to be at their side, this is something that I must do as a magician.”

“Ah—” The unexpected response elicited a gasp. Although his goal was as he had stated, to find a way to return home, unexpectedly, he had also taken his friends into consideration and sought to prepare a path leading them home.

Or actually, what was really surprising was...

“Wait, don’t tell me you can understand that thing?!”

“Given enough time, it shouldn’t prove that difficult.”

“That’s...!”

This was the hero summoning circle, something that was widely acknowledged to be beyond the realm of human comprehension, something that could neither be analyzed nor understood! And he’d said

that he could unravel its mysteries!

This was a legacy countless generations old. Both the amount of mana to be used and the incantation to be chanted had to be enacted precisely as described by the instructions that had been left behind before it could be activated. Because its construction was far too advanced, the mechanisms behind its operation were not, as of yet, understood.

And yet this boy had said that he could do it! Furthermore...

With a tone of slight surprise, Suimei continued, "Although I've spent some time studying spirit summoning objects before, to find something this complicated here, of all places, is rather unexpected."

It might be described as a stroke of luck.

"Seeing how much you worry about your friends, why haven't you told them anything? Though even if he knew, Yuusha-dono..."

"Your Majesty. If they knew what I really was, it'd only put them in danger once we return to our own world," Suimei interrupted.

There were more reasons than his personal safety as to why he couldn't let them know his true nature.

"And so you just keep it all to yourself?"

"Your Majesty, I can't say I understand what your world is like, but our world is like a nest of vipers."

"A nest of vipers?"

"Yes. In our world, even if someone does their best to keep quiet, simply possessing knowledge is a danger all its own. Reading someone's memories, erasing memories, forcing someone to tell you what they know

– if we're talking about magic, there are too many ways to count. Where we're from, to openly make my identity known would carry a terrible price. Beyond that, our world has its fair share of madmen who bare their fangs at people just for having the knowledge that magicians exist."

"Magic in your world is such a horrific thing?"

"Just so."

The King fell into a thoughtful silence at Suimei's honest nod.

Assuming Suimei's words were true, he still thought openness was the right choice, while at the same time, something that simply couldn't be done. When compared, the magic of his world was far darker and more insidious than their own. Enemies lurked around every corner and danger was constant, and so they'd been forced into hiding. Given that, the fact that Suimei had chosen to hide who he was made a lot of sense.

"Once Reiji and Mizuki desire to return home, I won't have much choice but to be honest with them then. But having been at their side until now, and having kept my identity a secret all this time... it's going to be hard."

"I imagine."

As he'd said, once they saw the magic that would take them home, there'd be no way around an explanation. They'd learned magic now, after all; once they returned home, there would rules about magic back home that they'd have to know. Although he acknowledged that revealing the truth was a necessity, but as he thought about how Suimei felt, he felt that it wouldn't be quite that simple.

With all these thoughts in mind, the King's expression revealed his complicated feelings. In a regretful tone, he spoke up once more.

"...So, in short, you still have no plans to join them?"

"I've already said this, but I don't like doing reckless things."

"For someone like you, who can defeat Felmenia, it doesn't seem that reckless to me? Moreover, if it's you, Suimei-dono, couldn't you become Yuusha-dono's strength?"

"Probably. But I don't think there's any need for that."

"Why do you say that?"

"Although we argued pretty heatedly back then, but Reiji is not that shallow a person. Even if he's always doing things that I don't expect, he does think things through, and when the moment comes, he's surprisingly cautious when making final judgment. Moreover, when you factor in the tremendous powers bestowed by the hero summoning, my worries are really just a small thing. While there's no guarantee that the Maou suppression force will actually succeed, but I don't think he'll die that easily."

"I see."

"That's why I don't need to worry that much," Suimei said with a smile. He seemed to trust Reiji quite deeply.

Suimei, however, continued with an uneasy tone, "They'll probably still run into some hard times, though."

This was probably because he'd thoughtfully considered their path ahead and couldn't be described as indifferent to those hard times they were to face.

At this, the King again sought confirmation from Suimei.

“Just to confirm, Felmenia...”

“As I said before, as long as she doesn’t say anything unnecessary, it’ll be as if nothing happened at all. —Actually, I guess it doesn’t matter at this point.”

With a look of relief, Suimei pulled out a white sheet of paper. At first glance, that sheet of paper, white as snow, didn’t look any different from any other piece of paper. A closer look, however, would reveal some writing and a seal of blood.

Suimei proceeded to fold the sheet as if preparing to tear it apart.

“S-Suimei-dono! W-wait—!”

The blood drained from Felmenia’s face as she cried out, though Suimei acted as if he hadn’t heard.

The sound of paper tearing filled her ears.

As she fell to the floor, engulfed by emotion, shreds of torn paper fluttered to the audience room floor.

Emptying his hands, Suimei snapped his fingers whereupon the paper fragments were consumed by flame and disappeared.

“Ah...”

“Miss Royal Mage, with this, the curse upon you has been lifted. You owe your life to His Majesty.”

Putting all thoughts of Felmenia out of his mind with a snort, Suimei turned to the King once more.

“Is that okay?” the King asked.

“You wish for there to be trust between us, Your Majesty; this was the

wall separating us. Between us, there is no longer any need for such a thing.”

He continued, “However, I ask that you do not inform Reiji and the others. I request that you promise to neither reveal nor hint at any of this. At least until the time comes when I have no other choice...”

“I understand. It will be as you say.”

The King promised to do as Suimei had requested. Seeing as the other party had conceded this much already, he had no reason to refuse.

He then proceeded to inquire about Suimei’s plans for the future.

“What do you plan to do after this? If there’s anything within the palace that can aid you in your goal of returning home, don’t hesitate to ask.”

They were the guests of the King and his subjects who had brought them here. That responsibility would not disappear. It had been for that reason they had willingly hosted them here in the palace. To continue to care for Suimei until the magic needed to return home was completed was only natural. Well, that was as long as Suimei intended to stay, of course; if he had other plans, then he’d like to know.

Suimei shook his head.

“That’s unnecessary. When Reiji and the others depart, I will as well.”

“What for?”

“I plan to visit the Nelferian Empire. The Empire stands as the crossroads of three different nations, and so it’s the best place to go to acquire the information and materials I’ll need,” Suimei explained.

Indeed, the Nelferian Empire was a central hub that had to be passed

through when reaching these kingdoms, Aster included. Subsequently, it was far more connected. Because the Aster Kingdom was an allied nation, travel between the two would be fairly simple. Just as Suimei had said, from the perspective of gathering intel and resources, that was indeed the most suitable location.

If he had to be honest with himself, the King would rather not have let such a powerful mage as Suimei out of his reach. However, seeing as restraining his actions was not within their ability, trying to force him to stay wasn't a good idea.

"...So that's how it is. Well, then if there's anything I can help with, please feel free to let me know. Knowing what you can do, any aid I might render is likely inconsequential, but if there's anything I can do, I will do my best."

Although he'd offered to support Suimei in his goal, Suimei did not nod.

"I greatly appreciate the sentiment, but please don't mind me."

"Why not? This is a foreign land for you, Suimei-dono. You really don't need any help whatsoever?"

Suimei was a person from another world with a different culture and customs. Moreover, he lacked a guide to rely on. For that reason, life here would be very difficult indeed. A certain amount of assistance should be expected.

However.

"It's fine. After this, I'll be seen as someone who couldn't take it anymore and left. There's no need to offer any support to such a person. That'll be the best considering our respective reputations."

“But...”

“After having caused such a commotion upon our arrival and then having subsequently holed up in my room, your people’s opinion of me is rather low. If you were to assist such an individual, while there would be some who would support your actions, many, many more would complain and resent you for doing so. This is not in your best interest.”

Suimei’s reading of the situation was spot on. Particularly were he to leave the palace, the King had to admit, there would be no small amount of gossiping and backbiting. Were he to further offer Suimei any assistance, the people would be furious. “Why is the King taking care of a useless piece of garbage like that? Does he only care about people from that world?” etc.

“I understand that, but I want to offer my help nonetheless?”

“Believe me, I appreciate it, but it’s too troublesome.”

“Alright...”

Suimei’s forceful tone had left me speechless. This Suimei seemed to be quite stubborn, not caring one whit about either others’ opinion of him or the offered aid, thinking them not worth considering.

Perhaps such a notion had been inspired purely by confidence in his abilities, but it couldn’t be said that such confidence was without basis.

Just what are those eyes of his staring at? They’re definitely not looking at me, the King thought to himself. No, those are eyes envisioning the difficulties that lie ahead, eyes that fully intend to challenge them head-on.

That powerful gaze didn’t seem like it could have come from someone his

age.

And so—

“...On the road of life, there will inevitably be mountains to climb. No matter how big they are, or how tall, any without the ability to cross such obstacles has no right to call themselves a magician. And I, Yakagi Suimei, am a magician, someone who challenges the mysteries of the world head-on, with my head held high. And so allow me to reiterate, Your Majesty, I sincerely appreciate the offer, but the sentiment is more than enough.”

The young man before him, speaking in a solemn tone, showed no weaknesses. There was in him a pride and a strength unique to those geniuses who wholeheartedly chased after miracles.

This young man was anything but ordinary. “An ordinary person caught up in the hero summoning” he was not.

As he watched the young man with a renewed sense of astonishment, Suimei spoke again in a grave tone, mocking himself.

“...Though even if I try to sound cool, in the end, I’m just a coward who, fearing for his own life, ran away from battle.”

“If that’s the case, then all of us who have pushed the burden of the Maou on completely unrelated people are just as much to blame. That, of course, includes myself...”

Who could blame Suimei? The only ones who could judge his decision to avoid battling the Maou were those who had challenged the terror of the Maou directly. No, those who were hiding themselves where it was safe had no right to say any such things. Particularly given that Suimei

was someone who had resolved to challenge the difficulties lying ahead all alone, there was not a one with the right to judge him.

To someone like Suimei, with numerous dreams and endless desires, staying here would only lead to stagnance. He couldn't be sure, but staying here would likely only cause Suimei pain. As he thought back to the young man anxiously shouting in this room before, he couldn't help but be grieved.

From that, he had been able to tell how Suimei felt, because he'd felt such feelings before. However, those had only been temporary partings from his daughter... he had no way of truly understanding just how Suimei felt.

The King sank into silence, lost in a whirlpool of emotion.

Slowly, Suimei spoke.

"Is there anything else you'd like to know?"

"In that case—"

Accepting his good will, the King asked many more questions. About him, about Reiji and Mizuki. Not restricting the conversation to just magic, they even talked about the relationship between the three friends.

For the two, this open conversation had been a long time coming.

Time passed, and Suimei left to return to his room. As he watched the young man depart, the King turned to his subject by his side.

"...Felmenia."

"Your Majesty."

"A truly enlightening discussion. Yuusha-dono and Mizuki-dono likely have never heard such things, correct?"

"It is as you say, Your Majesty."

The binding on her having been released, her expression having returned to normal, Felmenia agreed. She was the teacher of the Hero as well as someone acquainted with Reiji more personally, but she'd never had such an intimate discussion with the Hero. It was, from her perspective, rather refreshing.

Both parties fully understood one another, nothing hidden, and had come to an understanding. Any possible concerns and anxiety had been dispelled.

"...I don't suppose... There's no way Suimei-dono could have foreseen this outcome from the very beginning, could he?"

Felmenia frowned.

"Even assuming he did, he was way too careless still. If reality ever diverged from what he'd expected, then there'd be grievous consequences, and yet we've clearly seen he hasn't prepared anything for such an eventuality."

Just as she'd said, if the King had been unwilling to bow his head, and instead taken a hardline stance, then Suimei's prediction would have been incorrect, and an insurmountable gap would have resulted. That notwithstanding, Felmenia's remark that Suimei had made no preparations was undeniably false, the evidence being on Suimei's person directly.

"Felmenia. Suimei-dono's clothing... do you know what it represents?"

"His clothing? That's his combat attire— Ah!"

She'd realized. Combat attire.

Having understood what he'd meant, she looked at the King with admiration in her eyes.

"You are certainly wise, my king. Although Suimei-dono said not a word, you clearly understood."

"The second he entered, I felt an atmosphere in the room of a general, returning victorious from battle. That's how I knew," he answered, reminiscing.

As the cloak had appeared out of thin air to rest on Suimei's person, he'd been reminded of a general, returning from battle, traces of blood still on his clothes. He'd seen in his clothing the feeling of a man ready to return to the battlefield at any moment.

There was simply no way Suimei had not made any preparations beforehand, either for peaceful reconciliation or something more forceful —

"...I fear he was prepared no matter the outcome. If we presented ourselves as his enemy, then we would be dealt with accordingly. How we treated him would be how we would be dealt with. However the situation developed, he had an appropriate response prepared. We have, after all, numerous openings on this side. He'd probe those openings and determine if we could be trusted enough to settle this peacefully. If he determined that we sought to harm him, then he would have been far more forceful."

"Then does that not mean that tonight was a trap of sorts?"

"Even so, no harm no foul. Suimei-dono said that he has magic to

manipulate memories. Even if things had taken a turn for the worse, and even if he couldn't allow Reiji-dono or Mizuki-dono to know, he likely had ways to handle such a situation. If we had had any intention of harming him, there was no way we could allow the Hero to find out, and so we'd have to avoid a commotion at all costs. Our only choice would be to ambush him with a small force of our most elite. —Given that he'd already read the situation in advance, do you think there is any possibility of our victory in such an event?"

Having been freed from her oath, Felmenia could now answer such questions. Given Suimei's strength, would it be possible for the palace's most elite forces to successfully ambush him?

She considered for a moment before answering solemnly.

"...None whatsoever."

"Is that so. Huh."

Surprisingly, Felmenia's to-the-point answer had not surprised him. He'd already guessed that Suimei's strength was of such a level, and so he readily accepted her assessment.

"But still, Your Majesty, do you really think Suimei-dono had thought things through to such an extent?"

"That, who knows?"

"Huh...?"

"This is all just conjecture. There's really no way to verify the truth of it. No matter how logical what we've just discussed might be, as long as Suimei-dono never says a word, then conjecture is all it will ever be."

"T-That's true."

Felmenia's brow furrowed. Whether or not she truly understood, and even if she'd been the one to point things out, there was really no way to truly understand what Suimei had been thinking.

Although—

"For him as well, bowing my head to him must have come as a complete shock."

Indeed, this statement was almost certainly true. Because he, who should not be bowing to anyone, had lowered his head before him, Suimei had finally decided him worthy of trust.

"...That I can sympathize with."

"That's fine, don't worry about it."

The matter settled, the King changed the topic, his tone grave.

"—Now then, Felmenia. Let us discuss your punishment."

Felmenia did not object. Before they had summoned Suimei, she had already expressed her willingness to accept responsibility. She waited silently.

"...Understood. No matter what it is, I submit myself wholeheartedly."

"Then, Royal Mage of the Court, Felmenia Stingray: I strip you of your title, and—"

And with that, the long night for magician and kingdom both, drew to a close.